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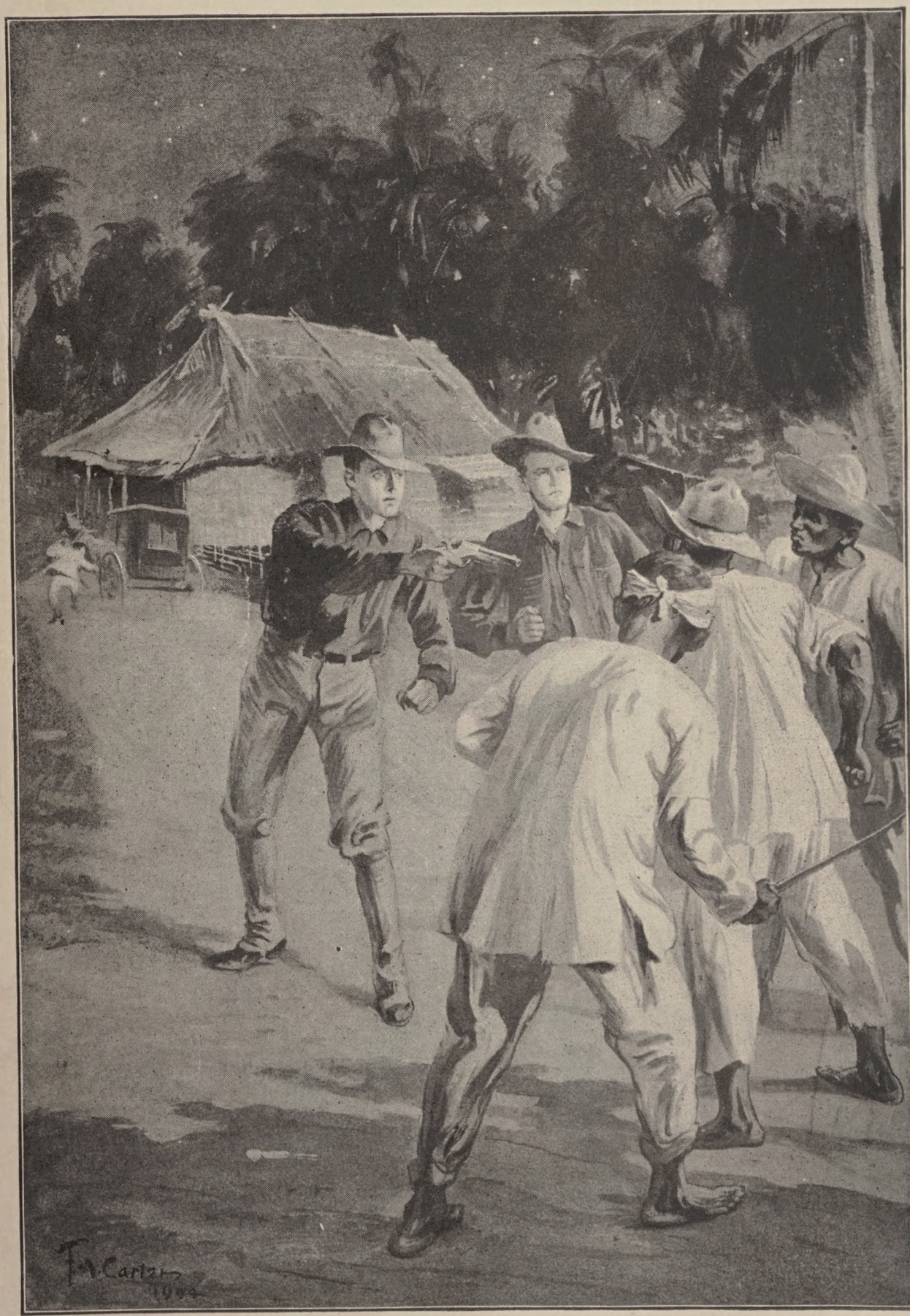

THE THREE BOLOMEN HALTED LIKE HUNGRY WOLVES

Winning his way to West Point

by

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Winning His Way to West Point

CHAPTER I

"HALT! WHO'S THERE?"

It was 8:30 P. M., February 4th, 1899.

The blistering heat of the day had abated, and though the "cool period" of the evening had arrived, the American army lay sweltering in the advanced lines which surrounded the city of Manila.

Accustomed to the chill, bracing winds of a February evening in his native land, the American soldier found the hot, perfumed breeze of the Philippines a seductive breath which wooed, yet nauseated him, which reduced him to an enervated wreck of his rugged, American self.

For nearly a year, the American troops had

uncomplainingly borne the burden of service in the Philippines, and had watched the gradual development of a crisis in American history. Landing on the shores of old Cavite after Admiral Dewey's victory, they had assaulted the Spanish troops behind the strong defenses of Manila, and had planted their victorious flag upon the old battlements which Spain had so proudly commanded for more than three hundred years. These glories had been won only to find that Aguinaldo, the leader of the Insurgents, demanded the fruits of their well-earned victories.

Pursuant to a wise and humane policy, they had prevented these Insurgents from plundering the captured city, and wreaking a terrible vengeance upon the European population, and they now found themselves facing the army of Aguinaldo in the trenches which he had gradually constructed about the American lines. The attitude of the natives toward the Americans was one of almost open hostility, and it had become universally recognized that war was inevitable.

The absorbing topic of conversation along

the whole American line was the possible outcome of an undesirable, but unavoidable campaign.

"I tell you, boys, this state of affairs can't last much longer. We are going to have a fight."

It was Corporal Jack Kelton of the First Nebraskas who spoke, and he spoke with an emphasis which carried conviction to his hearers.

His intensely interested audience consisted of Private Arthur Kelton, his brother, and Private Douglas Atwell, both of the "Reg'lars," who had come over from Malate Barracks, Manila, to visit Corporal Jack at the camp of the First Nebraskas. This excellent volunteer regiment enjoyed the proud distinction of occupying the most exposed point of the American line at Santa Mesa, and its sentinels were in almost constant contact with the Filipino Insurgents along the San Juan River.

It was clear that the tension between the two armies had reached its elastic limit, and that the slightest additional strain would produce a rupture. Eager to see all that might

occur, Corporal Kelton had led his visitors to the line of the outposts, and the three young men now sat upon a fallen cocoanut tree discussing the events which seemed to point so strongly to war.

"Go ahead, Jack," said his brother Arthur. "We are anxious to hear all about the situation. As you know, we are raw recruits, landed only three days ago. When I heard that you had gone out with the Nebraska Volunteers, I couldn't stay behind, but I chose to cast my lot with the Regulars. The papers in the States said that in less than a month the Insurgents would force us to fight, so I put up the plow, bolted for a regular recruiting office, 'took on,' and was ordered to join a batch of 'rookies' bound for the Philippines. My friend, Atwell, was one of the 'rookies,' and we found that we had both been assigned to Company M, ——th Infantry. So here we are, 'rookies' in the same squad, of the same company, in the Regular Army."

"Well," said Corporal Jack, resuming discussion of his favorite topic, "matters stand about this way.

"It looked so squally a short time ago that

derful courage when they believe themselves under the protection of an 'anting-anting,' that is, a stone, a book, or a charm of any sort, which they think possesses miraculous power to shield them from harm. All a leader has to do is to create a faith in some 'anting-anting,' and then send his dupes off to do his bidding. Well, some 'anting-anting' is liable to carry another patrol across that line, and then there will be fighting, and plenty of it."

Even as the Corporal spoke there seemed to be a movement down toward the bridge at which the sentinel had been posted.

"Hold on," whispered the Corporal. "What's that?"

The three rose and tiptoed down the road, peering eagerly through the semi-darkness.

"Halt! Who's there?"

The air seemed suddenly to grow cold, sending a chill creeping down the spines of the three young soldiers as they eagerly watched the sentinel of the First Nebraskas at the bridge across the San Juan River, snap down his rifle to the "port," and move rapidly under the flickering lights toward the object which had excited his challenge.

In the official letter to which Corporal Kelton had referred, Aguinaldo had agreed to a line limiting the territory in which his army might move, and that line intersected the bridge across the San Juan River which the Nebraskan was guarding. To sanction a violation of this compact would be no virtue of self-restraint, but rather a shameful abandonment of sovereign rights.

"Halt! Who comes there?" came the challenge a second time, but in sharper, more commanding tones than the first.

The regular tread of soldiers could be heard. The slight glint of bayonets was visible in the dim light. Slowly, sullenly, silently, an armed band of Insurgents was marching straight toward the forbidden territory.

"Halt, or I fire!" cried the sentinel, as a cartridge jingled in the chamber of his rifle, and the breech-block closed with an ominous click.

On came the silent squad—across the line.

The flash of the Nebraskan's rifle answered the insult, and the Lieutenant commanding the invading force fell at the sentinel's feet.

Back across the bridge the band scurried,

and disappeared in the darkness as suddenly as they had emerged from it, but out from the darkness came little, leaping tongues of flame, and bullets rattled through the shacks about the bridge entrance. Then, for the first time, the sentinel noticed that no lights shone in the windows. The shacks had been abandoned.

At the first shot, the guard had tumbled from their bamboo beds, snatched their rifles, and came forward at double time.

The bridge had been cleared by the retreat of the Insurgents.

A bugle call rang out from the west side of the San Juan River, and as its last notes died on the night breeze, a ripple of flame ran along the Insurgent trenches. The war, so long avoided by patient suffering of insult and insolence, had been most cunningly forced upon the American troops, and before the world they stood convicted of firing the first shot.

The bullets were knocking little flashes of fire from the bridge railing, and splintering the bamboo-trees, when the Sergeant arrived with the guard.

"What was the trouble, sentinel?" demanded the Sergeant.

"A squad of armed Insurgents refused to halt, crossed the line, and I fired. One of them went down over there on the bridge. Look out, Sergeant," continued the sentinel, as the Sergeant bent over the body, "that fellow may have a knife."

The Lieutenant was, however, beyond the power to inflict injury, or to precipitate another insurrection. His dying breath bore the unmistakable odor of "bino," or native wine, by the use of which he had stimulated his courage to the point of leading his men into the jaws of death.

The Sergeant rapidly disposed his squad.

"The orders are to fire only if we are assaulted. There will be no response at all to the fire from across the river until we receive instructions. Keep a sharp watch to the rear. It is reported that the natives intend to burn the city to-night, and make an attack on us from the rear as soon as we are well engaged in front."

Then the Sergeant withdrew to report the occurrence to superior authority.

Thus it happened that Privates Atwell and Kelton, recruits of three days' experience in the Philippines, were speechless spectators of the first hostile act in the long struggle which was to bring important consequences to both the young soldiers of the Republic.

Though the expected rupture with the Insurgents had been the subject of conversation at the moment of its occurrence, yet this tragic realization had come with startling suddenness.

"Come," said Douglas Atwell, first to recover his presence of mind, "we must get back to the company as quickly as we can. Listen! The Insurgents are opening up all along the line. Those shots are certainly on the south side of the Pasig. Come! We can't move too promptly."

The bugle was sounding in the camp of the Nebraskas. The regiment was preparing to form.

Corporal Jack Kelton grasped his brother's hand.

"Well, here's good luck to you, Artie, my boy. It was just as I told you, but I'm glad the fight's on at last. There was no use try-

ing to hold it off. Now we'll pitch in, and those little braggarts will have all the fighting they want inside of a week."

"Tell us the best way back to camp," said Atwell. "I hardly know where I am."

"Go back by carromato," answered the Corporal. "Old Pedro Fructuoso will take you down. Come, we will pull him out of bed in a hurry."

Corporal Jack Kelton led the way at a run, and in a few moments the three boys were tugging away at the gate of old Pedro Fructuoso's shack; Pedro, the vender of fruits to the "mucho bueno Americano"; Pedro, the company's friend; Pedro, the faithful "Americanisto."

Several mangy, slinking mongrels, with which Pedro's house was blessed, set up a terrific barking, but the house seemed deserted. The gate was ripped from its hinges, and Corporal Kelton pounded at the door. There was no answer, but a slight noise as of some one creeping toward the door, could be heard inside.

"Quick, Pedro. Get out your carromato. I have some friends to take to town," shouted

the Corporal in a Spanish-English conglomerate, intelligible only to the elect.

For answer, a hand was thrust from the window. There was a blinding flash, and a pistol bullet narrowly missed its intended mark.

Quick as instinct, Arthur Kelton seized the extended wrist, and Pedro, the good friend of the company; Pedro, the true Filipino, lay sprawling on the ground. The pistol was wrenched from his hand, and sitting on his chest, Arthur Kelton pressed the weapon against his head while Atwell and his brother rapidly harnessed the ugly little pony to the carromato.

"Do you know the way back?" asked the Corporal, as the trembling Pedro was tossed up to the seat, and the young men jumped up on either side of him.

"Only the general direction. But tell Pedro, in your wonderful Spanish, where we want to go, and this will do the rest," replied Arthur, as he held up the captured revolver.

True to his racial instinct, Pedro could not "sabe" (understand) the man whose language had been quite intelligible to him up to that

moment, but the violent collision of the muzzle of the pistol with Pedro's ribs induced some currents of intelligence, and stimulated him to heroic service.

The carromato bounded down the Santa Mesa road, and whirled into Calle Malacañan. A battalion of the South Dakotas was forming, and patrols were hurrying through the streets. Headquarters was ablaze with light, and officers and men were eagerly discussing the story of the shooting, and the name of the Nebraskan was on every lip.

Terrified native women were dashing through the streets toward their homes, while others were preparing to carry off their effects and escape from the city. In the side streets there huddled little sullen groups of men with glittering eyes that shone in the darkness.

Pedro had ceased to protest. He was thinking.

The carromato whirled across the upper bridge of the Pasig and turned toward Malate Barracks, where the regiment had been left.

As the carromato drew up in front of barracks it was halted by a sentinel in the street. The barracks were guarded by a single bat-

talion. Two battalions had marched out immediately upon receipt of news of the outbreak.

"You will find your company on the Singalon Road," said the sentinel, "and if you know what's good for you, you'll get out there good and lively."

The combined influence of the sentinel's rifle and the captured revolver induced Pedro to "sabe" the new situation, and to get his carromato in motion once more.

Fortunately Atwell had been out Singalon way on his second day with the company, and he was therefore able to guide the erring Pedro in the proper direction.

The two young Americans, having now reached familiar territory, relaxed their vigilance. It was the indication for which Pedro had patiently waited. The vehicle had reached the sparsely settled district on the Singalon Road when Pedro suddenly reined up his horse as he drew alongside of three natives standing in front of a gate of a shack somewhat separated from the rest.

Pedro had discovered that his trace was loose.

The unsuspecting American youths permitted him to descend.

The pony, under Pedro's dexterously concealed punishment, began to kick and plunge, and Pedro, with perfect appearance of resisting his refractory horse, completely turned him about in the road. Still clinging to the plunging animal, Pedro frantically gesticulated for the Americans to descend, and Atwell and Kelton stepped to the roadside.

The three natives came forward as if to render assistance, and Pedro said a few words to them in Tagalog, then leaped to the shafts of his carromato, and lashed his horse into a furious run down the road toward the city.

"Halt!" yelled Kelton, as he raised his pistol.

"Don't shoot!" cried Atwell. "Look out behind you."

Kelton swung his pistol around quick as a flash, and covered the leader of the three natives, who had pulled long, glistening bolos from beneath their white camisas, and were coming on to the attack; but something impelled the young soldier to withhold his fire.

To advance another step meant the death of one of the three natives, but by a determined assault they could certainly kill both the Americans, for Atwell was unarmed. The three bolomen halted like hungry wolves lacking the courage to close upon their prey, and the two young soldiers backed away along the dark road which leads to Singalon.

Fearing another encounter, Atwell secured a heavy bamboo stake that lay in the roadside, and when one hundred yards had been placed between the young men and the enemy which lurked in rear of the lines, they broke into a run. They were quivering with excitement and anxiety, for as yet there was no positive certainty that they were on the right road, that they might not be running straight into the arms of the Insurgents, and the experience through which they had just passed gave a clear indication of the fate that such a mistake would entail.

Tall bamboo-trees rose on either side of the narrow road, and their interlacing branches cut out the half-masked light of a dusky moon. A slight breeze rose, and moaned and sighed through their sharp-edged leaves, and

to the boys' excited imagination, the twisting shadows which they cast, formed threatening, man-like figures which made them shrink and hesitate.

Now it happened about this time that Juan Macaraeg, a half blind, and aged Filipino, was returning from the fields with his carabao. Too deaf to hear the shots that sounded off to the front, too indifferent to care, Juan Macaraeg was perched monkey-like on the back of his sleepy beast of burden, while beneath his toothless gums he mumbled a juicy betel-nut. Behind him trundled a half-grown carabao calf. At peace with the world the three strolled around a turn in the road, and entered the densely shadowed avenue toward Singalon.

It was at this precise moment that our young soldier friend became conscious, for the thousandth time, that there was something in the road in front, but with characteristic stubbornness he refused to shrink again from what might prove a mere shadow.

The collision, though every instant expected, produced nevertheless a terrific mental shock. All self-control for the moment was

lost. With a wild shout Atwell sprang desperately at the object in front, and with all the muscular force that eighteen years' service on a farm had developed in his arm, the club he carried descended upon the back of the carabao calf. Uttering a pitiful bawl, the calf leaped against its mother's heels, while Kelton opened fire in the general direction of the disturbance. The carabao, terrified by the shots and the onslaught of her offspring, leaped from beneath her rider, and Juan Macaraeg was dropped sprawling in the road.

Scrambling to his knees, Juan shouted out prayers and supplications for mercy, believing that he had fallen into the hands of "tulisanes," the native highwaymen.

The moon emerged from a cloud and revealed Atwell with his club, Kelton with his revolver, standing over the shriveled old native who was trembling in a mortal agony of fear. The routed carabaos were still lumbering down the road.

The young soldiers gazed at each other, and then burst into an uncontrollable fit of laughter. Juan, more startled by the laughter than by the fall, dashed to the hedge, scrambled

frantically over a bamboo fence, and disappeared in the forest.

"Come on, Kelton," said Atwell in a disgusted tone, "we are just a pair of 'rookies' that ought not to be let out of camp. We ought to be ploughing on the farm, or cooking on a canal boat, instead of wearing the uniform of soldiers in the regular army. Let's walk the rest of the way to camp."

They soon emerged from the road into an opening, and the welcome crackle of musketry was heard to the front, where Company M, ——th Infantry was under the fire of the enemy. With a deep sense of relief they knew at last that they were approaching their proper destination.

They were dripping with perspiration, exhausted by their exertions, and suffering from a deep sense of humiliation on account of the carabao incident, but that incident had produced complete mental recovery.

"We are not far from the line now," said Kelton. "I hope no one heard that shot. I wouldn't have that red-headed Casey find it out for the world."

"Well, it shows that we have a few things

to learn," returned Atwell. "No old soldier would have ever made that mistake."

The bullets were now raking the banana groves in rear of the line, but they walked along calmly, without fear or nervousness; for this was a mild, uninteresting experience after that grapple in the dark with the carabao calf.

The first shot had been fired—at a bleating calf, it is true, but yet a shot. The tremendous mental strain which always precedes an engagement had been broken.

CHAPTER II

UNDER FIRE OF THE ENEMY

THE two young soldiers came up in the rear of the company, which they found deployed and lying upon its arms, while the two company officers walked slowly up and down the line, ignoring the rattle of bullets about them.

Privates Atwell and Kelton came forward, saluted, and reported their return. They had been granted permission to leave barracks, and had rejoined the company as soon as it became apparent that their presence was required. The cool, dignified manner of the officers inspired them with a new feeling, and enabled them to stand with equal dignity and report their movements to their commanding officer.

"You will find your equipment in charge of the Company Quartermaster Sergeant. Get your rifles, belts, and ponchos, and take your

places on the line with your squads," directed Lieutenant Drexel, the company commander. "You will not fire unless we are assaulted. Do not load your rifles at all."

As he spoke a bullet split a bamboo alongside of which the group was standing, and the splinters were scattered over them. It required all the moral force the young men possessed to stand erect, but in the presence of the two unflinching officers, nothing seemed impossible.

"They will make two fine soldiers," said Lieutenant Drexel to his subordinate officer as the young men turned away to secure their rifles. "You noticed that they kept their heads like veterans when the bullet smashed the bamboo. I never saw better bearing in a pair of youngsters. That young Atwell, though only a boy, will do excellent work if he gets the chance. He is a natural born rifleman, if I am any judge of the relation between physique and markmanship."

"I agree with you," responded Lieutenant Milton. "I have noticed both of them and have been well impressed. They are country boys, right from the farm, and they came in

through patriotic motives. To-morrow will be trying-out day, and I will watch them."

Unconscious of the favorable comment which followed them, Privates Atwell and Kelton hastily buckled on their belts, snatched their rifles, and joined the line.

Corporal James Casey, in whose squad they were allowed to serve their country, awaited their arrival with ill-restrained impatience. Only the fact that higher authority had sanctioned their absence prevented the administration of such a rebuke as only Corporal Casey's veteran tongue could deliver. There was serious work in front now, and the irate Corporal was forced to defer his "dressing down" to a more appropriate and auspicious occasion.

The Insurgents were holding fast to their trenches, but kept up an intermittent rattle of musketry. Their ill-directed bullets swept far above the trenches behind which the Americans lay in perfect safety. Toward ten o'clock the fire slackened, and finally completely ceased. It had been a senseless waste of ammunition, but the vanity of the natives had been satisfied. They had attacked the

great Americans, conquerors of La Gran Bretaña, likewise victors over Spain, which had been their masters for three hundred years; and these great Americans dared not return their fire—lay like cowards, indeed, behind their trenches. The foolish little heads of the Filipinos were already formulating congratulatory proclamations, and dreaming of "fiestas" in celebration of the great victory.

The dream included a wonderful charge over the trenches in the morning, the slaughter of the whole American line, the giving over of the city of Manila to the vengeance of the conqueror. It is a peculiarity of the Filipino mind that no rough, inharmonious note ever enters the song of his conquests. That 10,000 American soldiers lay between them and the city of Manila was, to the natives, a negligible inconvenience in the consummation of the dream victory.

The American troops entertained no false impression of the problem which confronted them. They were well aware that the enemy, nearly 30,000 strong, completely enveloped the city from the bay on the north to the bay on the south. Fully alive to the seriousness

of the campaign which must be waged in a hostile country, against an enemy that outnumbered them three to one, they yet eagerly awaited the command to attack. The American soldier is a man who thinks for himself, and he is not slow in getting at a correct estimate of his enemy's fighting ability. The unanimous verdict of the line might be summarized in the words of the red-headed veteran, Corporal James Casey :—"If them lads bates us, it'll be in a foot-race."

As the fire in front slackened, conversation was resumed along the line.

"I wonder what started 'em?" suggested Skaguay McFadden.

"All cut an' dried, Skag," answered Klondyke Jones, his Alaskan pal. "As we come out, ye didn't notice no little brown brothers a-settin' in th' winders behind this 'ere line, a-smokin' cigarettes, did ye, Skag? No, I guess ye' didn't. I wuz out at the crossroads t'-day, an' 'long 'bout three o'clock I seen 'em peelin' out o' this 'ere end o' town as if it had th' plague. Th' ain't a pesky one o' 'em thet don't know jest when th' ball wuz t' begin, an' wot's on th' bill fur to-morrer."

"Are you on th' bill fur to-morrer, Klondyke?"

"You'll be sole owner an' propri'ter o' thet 'ere mine in 'Lasky, if I am."

"In this 'ere squad," he continued, "extremes hev been chucked t'gether with reckless disregard o' th' social propri'ties. Skaguay McFadden an' Klondyke Jones, owners o' gold mines o' fab'lous riches, is required t' eat beans an' bacon 'long side o' sech common critters as thet 'ere Jackson, th' collidge lad. An' t'-night when I'm preparin' t' make my last will an' testament, this 'ere lad, Atwell, had t' get mother's permission to come in. Tell us, lad," he continued, turning to Atwell, "how you made th' recruitin' officer believe ye wuz eighteen."

The remark attracted the attention of the vigilant squad leader, for Corporal Casey rose on his elbow.

"Tell us, instid, rookie, where ye wuz when the fracas began," he interrupted, with the intention of telling Atwell a few things about his estimate of a man who was absent from his company at the opening of a fight.

"At the outposts of the First Nebraskas,

where the bridge crosses the San Juan River," answered Atwell.

Corporal Casey sat bolt upright, completely forgetting the original object of his question.

"Ye don't say so," cried he. "Then tell us what ye saw."

Atwell briefly related what had happened at the outpost, while Corporal Casey came over close to him and eagerly listened to every word.

"And the sintinel," added the Corporal, when Atwell had completed his narrative, "the sintinel, what wuz he like?"

Atwell described him.

"Come here, Russell," said Corporal Casey, in great excitement, "an' tell th' b'ys what ye seen over th' river beyant, this day."

Private Fred Russell, a graduate of the University of California, rolled over toward the boys.

"I was passing that very outpost this morning," he began, "when I saw a squad of armed Insurgents, commanded by a little yellow lieutenant, coming across from the Insurgent side of the river. The sentinel, who was the man you have just described, Atwell, had just

come on post. He jumped out and halted the squad before they reached the dead line. That fellow, the sentinel, I mean, has a great gift for queer tongues. He 'hablars Espanol' like a Castilian, and 'sabes' Tagalog like a song, but he pretended not to understand the filthy names the little yellow fellows were calling him.

"Well, one fellow came up close to the sentinel, and partially blew the smoke of his cigarette in the Nebraskan's face, and then looking blandly up at the sentinel, he said, 'Mucho bueno Americano'; and added in Tagalog, 'What a nice roast pig you will make.'"

"Th' varmint," muttered Klondyke Jones, while the gritting of the red-headed Corporal's teeth could be heard, as he fiercely pounded the earth with his heel, and gazed out toward the Insurgent trenches.

"The sentinel stood it all just to find out what they would say," continued Russell.

"Finally, the Lieutenant commanded his men to fall in, and said in Tagalog, 'We'll go back, but to-night we'll return with more men, and if that pig stands in our way we

will impale him on our bayonets and roast him over the camp-fire.'

"The natives laughed, and jeered, and jostled up against the sentinel, and then strolled away calling back foul epithets.

"I asked the sentinel what they said, and when I heard his translation, I asked him what he proposed doing.

"'Nothing,' said he. 'As I understand Tagalog, I hear that sort of talk from the natives every day. It is the usual bluff and bluster, but if that squad really intends coming back here to-night to cross that line, I hope I may be the sentinel on post!'

"And from what Atwell says, he was there," concluded Russell, "and now the question before the house is, 'Who's the roast pig?'"

Russell's audience gave emphatic expression to their thoughts.

"Boys," he said, "we are going to have a fine fight to-morrow. Those little lads will be down to see us early. If they don't come early, we'll go over to see them. In either case there will be a fight, and I propose getting some sleep in the meantime, and I'd

advise all you 'ole sojers' to do the same. So good-night."

Russell stretched out on his blanket and prepared to sleep, and Atwell made ready to follow his example. They had just finished adjusting their heavy cartridge belts to a position which inflicted the minimum of discomfort, and had covered the breech-blocks of their rifles to protect them from the dew, when the familiar voice of First Sergeant Crimmins was heard as he came down the line, calling out names from a slip of paper he held in his hand.

"Russell," called the Sergeant.

"Yes, sir."

"Fall in for outpost duty. Fill your canteen, and bring your poncho."

"All right, sir," responded the ex-collegian, as he promptly prepared to obey the order.

"Got finished with thet 'ere sleep, Russell?" asked Klondyke Jones, but Russell had no further information to offer. "Thet 'ere boy ain't been spiled by collidge, Skag," continued Jones as Russell hurried away. "Mebbe it don't allus spile 'em, but most

gin'ly it does. My dad wuz allus a cautious man, an' wouldn't risk spilin' me."

"Atwell," continued the Sergeant.

"Here, sir," responded the recruit, and his heart jumped.

"Fall in, also. You'll find fresh water for your canteen at the kitchen."

"Very well, sir," said the ex-farmer boy as he prepared to join the nimble Russell, who was already proceeding to the usual rendezvous.

Kelton jumped up and came alongside of Atwell.

"Atwell," said he in a low tone, "I wouldn't say anything about that carabao calf we fought in the road to-night."

"I'd lose my right hand first," said Atwell.

"And say, Atwell, I examined that pistol we captured after I got into camp. There were exactly two shells in it. You remember I told you that I felt a prompting not to shoot when old Pedro gave us the slip, and the bolomen were preparing to slash us up. Had I fired the gun would have been empty, and Pedro knew that, and had told the bolomen that he would draw my fire and put us at the mercy of their knives. You may have the

shell old Pedro intended for us. I am going to keep, as a souvenir of the night, the shell I used in the 'carabao encounter.'"

Atwell thrust the empty shell into his pocket as he hurried away to join the detail as it fell into the line.

The company lay partially concealed in a bamboo thicket, while the ground in front was densely overgrown with tropical undergrowth, affording an excellent opportunity for a stealthy approach from the enemy's position. To meet this danger on such a field, it is necessary to throw out a protecting screen of outposts so located that they may see and yet not be seen. The sentinels must lie concealed, not walk, and the form of outpost that best meets these conditions is the "Cossack post," consisting of a corporal and three privates. Though Russian in name, it is American in origin.

Having briefly explained the situation and delivered his orders, Lieutenant Drexel divided the detail into three Cossack posts, and the Corporals quietly led their men across the trenches toward the enemy. The posts spread out and completely covered the company

front. Each Corporal placed two men behind a little elevation, and then conducted the third man fifty yards to the front, and ordered him to lie down and watch. The Corporals then returned to the men they had left, and lay down to wait for signals from their sentinels.

The companies of the same battalion to the right and left had thrown forward their posts, thus forming a thin line of human antennæ to feel for danger, and to send back a quiet message of alarm, if necessary. Thus guarded, the bulk of the army might lie down to sleep in safety.

Lieutenants Drexel and Milton walked in the rear of the line.

"Should the enemy open fire," said the company commander, "you will not respond. "Our Cossack posts are straight out in front, and if assaulted, they will retire across the trenches. Do not mistake them for the enemy. All talking must now cease. Go to sleep on your arms."

The words were spoken in a quiet, conversational tone, yet to those who heard, they carried the weight of irresistible authority.

The Captain of the company was on detached service, and Lieutenant Drexel was in command. It was he who was to lead them against the enemy.

As he stood behind the line, the men looked up into his calm, dignified face, lit up by the moon which had broken from its cover behind the clouds, and every soldier in the ranks felt the power of his leadership. His arms folded across his chest, Lieutenant Drexel gazed out over the ground to be stained on the morrow by the blood of many a fond mother's pride, and with great effort he held back the thought of his lonely wife and child at home, while in cool, methodical order, he mentally arranged the attack on the enemy's lines.

In the clear moonlight, he could see the second relief of Cossack post number two, crawling forward to relieve the sentinel who had first gone on duty. A half hour had passed since the establishment of the outpost. Recruit Douglas Atwell, rifle in hand, 100 rounds of ammunition in his belt, was crawling forward to relieve Private Fred Russell. Half-way forward, he whistled softly. Rus-

sell responded, and Atwell then crawled forward to his side.

"Everything seems quiet in front," whispered Russell. "Since the moon came out, any movement is visible. Now, follow this line along with your eye. That little black bump is the next sentinel. There is the one on your left. The orders are to whistle very softly if you see anything suspicious. The Corporal will crawl forward to you—you must not come back to him—unless we are attacked and driven in. Do you understand?"

"Yes, I understand," answered Atwell.

Russell slid off the hummock on which he had been lying, and Recruit Atwell was alone facing the enemy. It was not the usual custom to put recruits on outpost duty, but Lieutenant Milton had instructed the First Sergeant to put him on. For the young soldier, there was no terror in the situation, for he now knew that his enemy was in front, and he was ready for any emergency.

But struggle as he might, our young friend could not keep his thoughts from dwelling on the prospects of the coming day. He pictured the fight, the charge, the hand-to-hand

struggle, and wondered if his courage would be equal to the test. He saw himself dead upon the parapet, a gaping hole in his chest; thought of the home he had left, the terror-stricken faces when the news would come of his death; saw his mother, ah, poor mother ——

Then the dim outline of the Insurgent trench with its background of bamboo and banana-trees, gave place to a scene on the sunny slopes of the Shawangunk Mountains in eastern New York, and the boy was back again amid the scenes of his early infancy.

Eighteen years and two months ago that very day, a tenth child was born in the family of John Atwell. The little newcomer was likewise seventh in an unbroken series of boys, and the family rejoiced, for there was in this Scotch-Irish family, a revered tradition that a seventh son brought manifold blessings upon the lucky family that bore his name. This special dispensation of Providence, however, brought no apparent advantage to John Atwell. His sudden death when his seventh son was but five years of age, terminated the career of an honest man, but an unsuccessful

farmer, and left a family of ten children, fitted for struggle with the world by such education as could be secured by winter attendance at a country school, three miles from his home. The farm, sunk in debt, went under the hammer to satisfy a host of creditors. The boys sought employment on the adjoining farms, and little Douglas found himself alone with his mother in a little rented house, but he possessed the great privilege of almost uninterrupted attendance at school.

From his mother he learned the story of an ancestor, Douglas Atwell, a seventh son, who had fought heroically on the disastrous field of Culloden, and had won all that was possible—a kingly gratitude, an empty purse.

Private Douglas Atwell, sentinel on Cossack post, number two, had inherited the spirit of this revered ancestor, and in obedience to that spirit, he was now crouching over his rifle, face toward the enemy's trenches.

A sleepless night had worn away. Douglas had taken his turn several times upon his post, and now, in the early morning light, his

eyes were searching the enemy's parapet, partially visible one thousand yards distant. Suddenly the long smooth line of the parapet seemed to him to break out into a dusky fringe. A moment more, and that fringe was a fringe of fire. A tremendous crash followed, and with it a hail of bullets rattled through the bamboo. Then Private Atwell knew what had happened. The Insurgents had risen and delivered a volley toward the American line. Small clouds of dust leaped in the air, and something hissed suddenly in his face. His cheek was spattered with dirt that rose from the mound of earth on which he was lying.

The fight had begun.

CHAPTER III

A FIERCE ASSAULT

It is a natural instinct in man to resist sudden assault, and to think afterward.

Recruit Douglas Atwell obeyed his natural instinct, thrust a shell into the chamber of his rifle, and raised the weapon in readiness for the next hostile upheaval in front, when he was startled by a sharp command.

"Down with yer rifle an' put back them catridges. The Lootinint's arthers wuz not t' do no shootin' till ye wuz tould ye cud."

Corporal Casey, never forgetting the slightest detail of his superior's orders, was hovering over him like a hawk.

"If ye have as much brains in yer head as a chicken in th' bar-rnyar-rd, thry t' show it," added the Corporal with infinite scorn.

The offense might not have been so serious had it not been for that unforgivable absence from the company, and from Corporal Casey's squad on the preceding night.

"Now," continued the Corporal, as he watched the cartridges go safely back to the belt, "crawl—crawl, mind ye, back t' th' rest av th' squad. We have arthers t' go in."

Douglas faithfully did as he was told. The Corporal made a signal, and the whole post retired. The company was uncovering its front for action.

Sentinels were posted along the immediate company front, and the men made ready for breakfast.

One hundred yards to the rear, Quartermaster Sergeant Haller had his bull carts drawn up behind a dense bamboo hedge, and "Reddy" Fagin and the Chinos were hard at work in the preparation of a tasty breakfast. Potatoes were boiling on the "Buzzacott," and the fragrant odor of coffee rose from a boiler beside the potatoes.

Each man received his three small strips of bacon on his meat-can. The Corporal of each squad then gathered his flock about a little fire, and the bacon was soon fried to crisp, brown bits. With steaming meat-cans, the company then filed past Sergeant Haller, and each received a potato, two pieces of bread, a

pint of coffee, and a piece of canned corned beef.

Guarded from danger by a portion of the outpost in front, Recruit Atwell sat behind the bamboo screen, and thought he had never eaten a finer breakfast.

In half an hour, Sergeant Haller had repacked his bull carts, and was ready to follow the line wherever the fate of the day might take it.

The outposts now took their places in the company, and only the magic word of superior authority was necessary to set the machine in motion.

From the hostile trench there came only an occasional shot, which the company quite ignored.

Canteens were filled, and slung from the shoulder, but the haversacks were turned over to Sergeant Haller to be guarded at the risk of his life. The preparations for the coming battle were producing no more display of emotion than the daily formation for guard mounting at Malate Barracks, and Private Douglas Atwell felt a glow of pride in the fact that he, a young recruit, shared with these seasoned

veterans of the regular army their indifference to the consequences of the day. But suddenly his heart beat fast within him, for he saw, back behind a clump of bamboo, an ambulance drawing up, and from the ambulance a surgeon was taking a box of instruments, while a number of men of the Hospital Corps were preparing litters for the dead and wounded.

The blood rushed to his face, and the thoughts of the preceding night came surging back through his brain, but with a great effort, he mastered his quivering nerves, and felt a new acquisition of strength in having passed through the struggle. Fortune, moreover, brought an interesting diversion to his aid, for the loud chuckle of the "ole sojer" was heard on his right.

"Look up, Skaguay," shouted Klondyke Jones, as he leaned his back against a rice paddy, and dangled his rifle between his knees. "Durn my skin if thet 'ere ain't th' 'Queer Feller.'"

Astride the back of a mangy, decrepit, little pony, his legs nearly touching the road, came a slim, wiry, dark-looking soldier, known

to Company M, ——th Infantry, as the "Queer Fellow."

His rifle, slung across his back, projected high above his head. His shoulders were carried abnormally high, and an old campaign hat was pulled down over his head until his ears splayed out beneath the brim. No bridle, halter, or even a rope, graced the neck of his steed whose footsteps he guided by reaching forward for an ear and pulling the meek animal in the desired direction.

Completely ignoring the laughter which his appearance inspired, the "Queer Fellow" stepped off his horse's back as he would step from a rail fence, and solemnly and respectfully reported to his company commander.

"Who's that?" asked Atwell.

"Thet 'ere's Bill Smathers, th' 'Queer Feller,' vacant file in this 'ere set o' fours," answered Russell, in perfect imitation of Klondyke Jones' manner and voice, for Russell possessed wonderful ability as a mimic.

"You have been 'in' long enough to have discovered that the most important unit in the Eighth Army Corps is this particular squad, consisting of seven insignificant fragments of

humanity, and one 'King'—Casey, by name. Well, Skaguay, Klondyke, me, and the 'Queer Fellow,' are the permanent stars of this particular constellation. You, Kelton and Jackson are recent acquisitions.

"Private Bill Smathers, the 'Queer Fellow,' has been sick in the hospital for two weeks, but he must have heard that we had gone out for the fight. So he escaped from the hospital, captured that war horse, and here he is to get into the trouble. He has been with the company for fifteen years. So have Klondyke and Skaguay. That trio drove six mule teams together all over the prairies in the old days when the army did not know what it was to be in a city garrison.

"Klondyke says that Bill Smathers used to amuse himself 'sparrin' with an old mule. Well, one day the mule hit out when Bill was stooping down behind him, and Bill wasn't looking.

"That's why Bill's neck is wrinkled up like a turtle's, and why his shoulders look so high, and that's why Bill sometimes gets bubbles in his think-tank."

The subject of this discussion had taken his

place in the squad, greeting his old companions with that sober, mind-your-own-business manner, so characteristic of a certain variety of western plainsmen.

There was something about Bill Smathers that invited people to keep out of range unless they were up to his ideas of squareness, yet he was clearly a prime favorite with the company.

"Have we any more like the 'Queer Fellow' in the company?" asked Atwell, anxious to hear the full history of the men with whom he had cast his lot.

"No," said Russell. "This company is blessed with a number of the elect. We have eighteen boys from the University of California. I am one, and Jackson of this squad is another. Sergeant Davis and Corporal Early are two more. You will become acquainted with them as we go along.

"The rest of the company is made up mostly of Irish and Germans. They are the fighters —if not with the enemy, then among themselves. There are few monotonous moments when rivalry is at its best. Then, also, we have Janowski and that other 'ski—I forget

his name, and cannot pronounce it anyway except with the aid of an ounce of pepper to stimulate my nose. We call him McCarthy, and they say he has been trying to develop an accent to harmonize with the name."

"You spoke of Jackson of this squad," said Atwell. "I do not recollect having seen him since I joined."

"Jackson—Leland Carlysle Jackson, of the University of California, is company clerk. No, you have not the honor of his acquaintance. He spends as little time as possible with the squad. His father is a rich and influential politician, and 'Leel' can't quite get over that fact. It is a great mortification to his proud spirit to serve as rear rank file to a red-headed Irish Corporal, but to my mind it is one of the great sources of strength of the regular army that a man's place in his company is not determined by financial or political rank, but rather by the number of inches he stands in his stocking feet. That's why I rub elbows with Klondyke Jones, and stand third from the right in my squad, and that's why you have the honor of being my rear rank file.

"Ah, here comes Milord Leland himself.

He has been ordered out to march under the 'arthers av the King,' and dollars to doughnuts he is not well pleased."

A slender, handsome, well-built boy, with clean shaven face and aspect of scrupulous neatness, was coming, with rifle in hand, from the direction of the First Sergeant's shack.

This was Leland Carlysle Jackson.

"I wonder why he ever came into the army," thought Douglas Atwell as he watched the superior-looking young man whose private income was more than that of the weather-beaten General who was commanding the Division.

The musings of our young friend on the subject of his interesting comrade-in-arms, were interrupted by the sudden appearance of Lieutenants Drexel and Milton, who came out from the little shack which they had occupied during the night. It was 7:00 A. M., and orders had been received from Major Marfeigh, commanding the battalion, to move forward to the attack.

Lieutenant Drexel blew a shrill blast upon a whistle, and raised his arm in the direction of the enemy. The men jumped to their

places, and a grim silence settled over the line as it moved forward through the thicket.

Once clear of the bamboo enclosure in which the company had been partially concealed, young Atwell looked down the whole thin line of the third battalion. All sense of danger had departed, and his heart was thrilled with a strange, new feeling; for he was going out to battle—to win, he felt quite sure.

In a few moments all was lost to view except the men, now of his own company, now only of his squad. The undergrowth became more dense, and each man was practically alone; but through them and among them ran Corporal Casey, his face beaming under a shock of flaming red hair, a pillar of strength to his company commander.

To young Atwell, it had all seemed not unlike an eager dash through the forest, until, with much difficulty, the line forced its way through a dense bamboo hedge, and emerged in the open.

A ringing volley greeted his ears, and the air seemed alive with bullets. In a startled glance down the line, he saw two men fall, pierced through and through.

Three hundred yards to the front were the trenches of the enemy, and over their parapets the Insurgents poured their shots as fast as they could work their breech-blocks.

Down upon their faces fell the men, and back flew the answer to the opening volley. A cloud of dust rose from the Insurgent trench and the enemy was visibly hit. The natives sank almost out of sight, leaving only a head visible here and there, and their fire became high and wild. Thus protecting their bodies from the fire that swept their trenches, they thrust their rifles above their heads and delivered a rapid, but unaimed fire toward the American line.

Young Atwell lay striving in vain to deliver his first shot.

His sights looked like mountain ridges; his head jerked away from each hissing missile that sped above him, and his rifle wobbled miserably.

"Fire, lad! Fire! Let aff yer first shot," rang a familiar voice in his ear. The ever vigilant Corporal was bending over him.

"There! Now, aisy, lad, aisy. Make th' nixt count. Don't think av yer gun. Pull

aisy, an' think av yer tar-rget. There! There! Ye have it, lad. Now, skewer thim."

Perfectly collected now, young Atwell held his rifle with steady nerve, and delivered his fire with the accuracy of a veteran.

On his left lay Russell. Sandwiched between the old veterans, Klondyke and Skaguay, lay Kelton, receiving the hypnotic inspiration of the red-headed Corporal. The "Queer Fellow" came next, while Jackson was on the left of the line.

The bugle pealed a few notes from somewhere in the depths of the bamboo.

"Forward!" yelled the Corporals. The line sprang up, and crouching over their rifles, covered fifteen yards to the front, and at a second peal of the bugle, came down again and resumed fire.

The Insurgents occupied four redoubts won from the Spanish in the last Revolution and they were holding their lines with great tenacity, for a famous wise man had told them that the anting-anting which had assured him of victory over the Spanish troops had repeated its sign of success.

One hundred yards had been gained in successive rushes. Atwell stole a hasty glance to the rear as the line rose to advance. The sight made his heart stand still. The field was dotted with the dead and wounded. Jackson had disappeared from the squad. Lieutenant Drexel lay dead upon the field and the fate of the day rested on the shoulders of Lieutenant Milton, the little West Pointer.

The fearful heat and the rapid advance were exhausting the men, and yet the enemy showed no sign of abandoning the trenches, and a flanking fire was now reaching the company from a bamboo thicket to the left and front. It seemed as if the gallant line would be forced to halt and ask for help. But suddenly, off to the left, the crash of Scott's artillery was heard, and the shrapnel raked the jungle from which the tormenting fire had come, while a low boom rolled in from the sea, and broke with muffled reverberations over the sweltering troops. The Monadnock had opened upon the Insurgents' left.

An exultant shout rose from the line, and in the partial suspension of fire that followed, the rattle of musketry was heard to the left

where the volunteers had gone forward under General King.

It was the psychological moment in which victories are won, or fields are lost—an opportunity seized upon instantly by the peerless little Milton. Far out to the front, facing his company, his back turned toward the hail of bullets from the infuriated Insurgents, he rang out his sharp command over the tumult.

"Fix bayonets! Forward! To the charge! March!"

Up rose the line. On it came behind its leader as the wave follows the irresistible impulse of the moon. A fierce desire filled the heart of Douglas Atwell, recruit, filled it till he felt it must burst—a desire to reach the side of that heroic little officer, and fight for his victory till he should die.

Unconscious of the shouts of Corporal Casey, "Kape yer line! Kape y-e-r line!" Douglas Atwell leaped to the front with the agility of a tiger, and mounted to the highest point of the enemy's parapet beside his young company commander—first to reach it, first, except for one other—for the "Queer Fellow" was there, and knocking the little Insurgents

about as the grizzly bear knocks the dogs that attempt to bring him to bay.

The company swarmed over the trenches and poured their fire into the terrorized natives as they broke desperately for cover.

"Come on! Come on! Come on!" shouted Milton, as he saw himself confronted by a new trench guarded by a blockhouse 200 yards to the front. It must be carried by pressing the retreat so closely that the panic of the routed Insurgents would be communicated to the defenders of the blockhouse.

Instantly the line responded. Volley after volley raked the ranks, but the line came on in a magnificent charge. The panting men swept the trench from end to end, and poured through the door of the blockhouse.

The attack had been made straight to the front, and with great chagrin the company saw the enemy making good his escape. The little black fellows were flying through the banana groves with a speed that seemed to make pursuit useless.

Bill Smathers fired twice at one of these, but missed, flung down his rifle, and, to the dismay of the company, jumped over the

BILL SMATHERS STARTED AFTER THE FLYING INSURGENT

trench and started after the flying Insurgent. The native was not conscious of the pursuit until the "Queer Fellow" was within ten paces of him. Then it was too late. With one lightning blow the native was knocked to the earth, his rifle was wrenched from his hands, and he found himself yanked to his feet and propelled with terrific force toward the American line.

"Thet 'ere's a pris'ner," said the "Queer Fellow," as he strode back across the trench with the captured rifle on his shoulder. "Couldn't git 'long 'thout one o' 'em, at least."

CHAPTER IV

PRIVATE ATWELL MAKES AN ENEMY

The blockhouse and trenches had been captured, but the thickets were infested with the concealed enemy. Bullets seemed to come from all directions, and the company found itself subjected to a stinging fire. Lieutenant Milton promptly disposed his men in the captured blockhouse and along the trenches, and responded with great vigor. No puff of smoke revealed the hiding-place of the vicious Mausers, which, lying in the jungle, could with perfect safety to their bearers rake the American line from end to end. Smokeless powder was already making its impress on the campaign.

A fine victory had been won, and the spirits of the men were high. The other companies of Major Marfeigh's battalion were pressing forward on the left and right, and the crash of Scott's artillery became louder and louder as the pieces were forced forward through the

thicket where the second battalion of the regiment had advanced along the Estero de Gallina, a deep and muddy creek. The volume of fire gradually increased until a skirmish had grown into a battle, the sounds of which rolled back through the dense forest screen which shut the participants from view. Then the firing suddenly ceased, and a distant shout was faintly heard by the conquerors of blockhouse No. 14. The Insurgent line had been rolled up on the left, and the enemy was tumbling back in confusion on Pasay, where another line of intrenchments had been erected.

Fire from the underbrush in Milton's front had ceased. The victorious troops on the left were forming on the Singalon Road where they had been joined by troops of the regular cavalry, and of the Washington, Dakota, and Tennessee volunteers, which had been sent forward as a support.

No longer occupied by the enemy in front, the men of gallant Company M eagerly discussed the details of the hard fight through which the regiment had passed, the hardest part of which had fallen to their lot. They

had lost heavily—just how heavily no one as yet knew. Every squad had its vacant files, which had been filled that morning with specimens of the best manhood the country could produce. Before the setting of another sun, the cable, like a great sensory nerve, would carry back its message of pain to sting the hearts of mothers and wives to untold agonies.

Lieutenant Drexel lay back there on the field, dead—the bugler said—shot through the heart. But it is not in the nature of man to linger long over calamities. The expressions of sympathy and regret for the man whom the company had so much loved and respected were mingled with loud-spoken words of applause for little Milton, who had carried them on to victory.

And who was the "rookie" who had so nearly outstripped the "Queer Fellow," who had fought like a madman on the trench alongside the Lieutenant?

"Atwell—Douglas Atwell, subject of 'King' Casey, and my very promising understudy," explained Russell, as he poured water down the hot barrel of his rifle. "I trained him up

to that form in three days, and I think I may now risk letting him go out on the world on his own responsibility."

"And give his instructor a few lessons," added one of Russell's college chums.

Douglas heard the talk. Another small group was discussing the same subject with enthusiastic comment, and Atwell was surprised to find that the company was agog over his performance. He had acted solely from uncontrollable impulse, and felt no claim to superiority over his comrades. But there were the men talking of his "bravery," and here came Kelton with a hearty hand extended to grasp his own; and the young boy, youngest of all that company, flushed with joy and happiness. The lonely mother on the slopes of the Shawangunk Mountains would hear no tale of tragic death in a tropical jungle, but rather she would hear that her boy had fought the gallant fight, and had won the applause and esteem of his whole company.

As Douglas and Kelton stood talking together, a mounted group rode out from the Singalon Road, and headed toward the blockhouse. From the superiority of the mounts

and appointments, Douglas readily guessed that the group included personages of distinction. One of the number galloped out ahead of the rest, and recognizing an officer in the person of the rider, the two boys jumped to attention and rendered the prescribed salute.

"Present General Ovenshine's compliments to Lieutenant Milton," said the officer, reining up, "and say that the General would like to see him here for a moment."

Douglas found Lieutenant Milton in the blockhouse, and delivered the message, and both had returned to the trench as the General rode up.

The young officer's hand rose in respectful salute.

"Lieutenant Milton," said the General, "my staff has brought me the report of your very gallant conduct in the capture of this blockhouse, which was so important to our line. I congratulate you and your company most heartily, sir, and I will see that your name is reported to General Anderson; I trust that you will be properly rewarded."

"Thank you, General, thank you very

much, sir," said Lieutenant Milton, as he stood erect and at attention; but aside from a quick flash of gratitude that shone in his eyes, no other expression passed over the face of the well-trained young officer.

Private Atwell gazed and pondered. This was a new world into which he had entered, a new world governed by special, exalted laws; a world made up of utterly dissimilar units whose levels of equality were fixed solely by official orders.

To follow with unquestioning obedience; to lead with unhesitating fearlessness; to suffer adversity with fortitude; to accept success with dignity, were the standards to which this new world aspired. And Private Douglas Atwell gazed upon the exponent of all these principles, this alert little officer from West Point, and with his whole heart the young recruit resolved to emulate the conduct of his superior officer.

"Sergeant," said Lieutenant Milton, as the General rode away, "send back a detachment over the battle-field with instructions to search for the dead and wounded, and to give all possible assistance to the Hospital Corps.

The non-commissioned officer in charge of the detachment will find Lieutenant Drexel's body, secure any money, letters, or valuables he may have on his person, and bring them to me."

Among the men detailed to execute this order, were Douglas and Klondyke Jones.

The excitement of the action had worn away, and the young boy shivered as he saw the results of the engagement. The space between the blockhouse and the entrenchments was dotted with the Filipino dead and wounded, while along the bottom of the trench the bodies lay crossed and distorted. Just outside the trench lay two of the company's dead, while a little farther back lay honest First Sergeant Crimmins, painfully wounded.

Douglas noted with surprise the dexterity and tenderness with which the rough "ole sojer," Klondyke, cared for the wounded. The theoretical instruction which every soldier receives in garrison, was, in his case, supplemented with much valuable experience in Alaska.

"Don't niver put yer finger on a woun',

Atwell. Pour on water till it's nice an' clean, but never tech it. Slap on yer anterseptic bandages, an' lash 'em fast, an' then if ye kin, hide yer man so thet th' doctors can't lay hands on him fur 'bout an hour. He's then mos' gin'ly safe."

Most of the dead had been collected, and the Hospital Corps had arrived to take charge of the wounded. Douglas and Jones were scouring the thickets about 200 yards in rear of the trenches when Douglas suddenly came upon a soldier lying behind a clump of bamboo and almost concealed in the underbrush.

It was Jackson.

Douglas moved softly over to the body, and stooped to make an examination, when Jackson gave a violent start and jumped to his knees, his eyebrows knit, and his face bearing an expression of fear and anger.

"Where are you wounded?" said Douglas. "Let me help you."

"I—I—— Yes, I'm wounded. I'm prostrated with the heat."

Jackson sat up and mopped his quivering face.

"Well, get along, rookie, what are you staring at?" he said angrily, as Douglas stood waiting to render assistance. "Get out of the way. I can take care of myself."

The underbrush was thrust aside, and Klondyke Jones appeared.

"Git up, Jackson," he shouted, as if breasting a steep hill with a six mule team, "git up, sir, an' jine yer comp'ny."

And Jackson obeyed.

"Atwell, thet 'ere ain't no case o' heat prostration," said Klondyke Jones as Jackson moved away, "thet 'ere's a case o' quittin'. In every big corral o' mules, ye allus finds one er two balky, wuthless critters, but 'tain't no use talkin' 'bout it, 'tain't good fur th' rep'tation o' th' corral."

And thus it happened that Private Atwell, on a mission of mercy, unwittingly made an enemy.

CHAPTER V

AFTER THE FIGHT

It was 2 P. M. when Jones and Douglas returned to the company.

Sergeant Haller and "Reddy" Fagin were there with the "forage," and despite the fierce heat that beat down relentlessly upon the field, driving all to seek shelter, these two indefatigable soldiers loudly exchanged their impressions of the day.

It was the hour of the siesta, or midday rest, when the native forgets even his hostility to Americans, and sinks into a torpid sleep.

"Let's go over an' git suthin' t' eat," said Klondyke, as he fanned himself with a fragment of a banana leaf, and mopped the perspiration from his pulsating temples.

Sergeant Haller was glad to furnish all that was available—hardtack and coffee. The company must be ready to move at a moment's notice, he explained, as he led his carabao away to a small mud-hole where the

animal might roll in the water and wet his parched hide.

As the old veteran and the young soldier sat down silently to their simple meal, their eyes wandered through the bamboo clumps, and simultaneously fell upon the same object.

Jackson was sitting upon a fallen cocoanut tree, eating a piece of hardtack, and drinking coffee from his tin cup, and Corporal Casey was facing him and demanding an explanation of his whereabouts during the engagement.

"Taking care of the wounded," said Jackson, with easy confidence.

"And who giv' ye permission t' leave me squad t' take care o' th' wounded?" sharply demanded the Corporal.

"No one. Reiter was hit, and I ran over to him. I saw he was bleeding to death, so I stayed with him and tried to stop the flow of blood. Reiter and I have been friends all our lives, classmates at college, and I couldn't leave him alone to die. Nothing could save him, however, and so I left as soon as the Hospital Corps men came on the field."

Corporal Casey's onslaught had been

checked, and Jackson thoroughly enjoyed the advantage he had scored.

"Where was Reiter hit?" continued the Corporal in a more gentle tone.

"Through the hips," answered Jackson promptly. "A large artery was cut, and nothing could save him."

"Thet 'ere lad's goin' t' make one o' th' great political pillars o' th' state, some day," said Klondyke Jones. "He has all th' necessary qualifications. Shouldn't be s'prised t' see him 'lected t' congress fur his gallantry in action this mornin'."

Jackson had disposed of Corporal Casey for the time being. He flung away his unfinished hardtack, dumped out the coffee, and came back past Jones and Douglas on his way to the position of his squad. It was clear to him that they had overheard his conversation with the Corporal, but he knew that they could not disprove his assertions.

The very opposites in every quality of body and mind, the two boys gazed in silence at each other, and each instinctively felt that he was the natural born enemy of the other.

"Th' only question is what t' do 'bout th' case," said Klondyke.

"Nothing at all," said Douglas emphatically. "He may have fallen out to help Reiter—you can't prove that he didn't. I am willing to believe that he did, and if he did not, then it is only a matter of time until he will show his character to the whole company. This is his first fight, anyway, and I think we ought to keep silent."

"Sound as a dollar, thet 'ere argiment," said Klondyke, as he shot a peculiar glance from his keen eyes at his young companion. "I wuz jest wonderin' how you'd look at it, as I seen thet you two boys wuz goin' t' be great friends."

Douglas only laughed. Just then the conversation was interrupted by a bugle call from the direction of the blockhouse, commanding the company to fall in. The inconsiderate Americans were about to violate the sanctity of the siesta hour.

Douglas and Jones hastily joined their squad, and the company marched out to join the troops already forming on the Singalon Road. The second battalion of the regiment

now took the lead, and the column resumed its march on Pasay.

Hostile outposts were at once encountered, and the advance guard became engaged, and gradually deployed into a thin line of skirmishers. The Dakota volunteers had advanced along the beach road, and the Insurgents, now finding themselves pressed from three sides, attempted no further resistance, and made frantic efforts to escape. Rifles were deserted, uniforms were flung in the street as they fled, and thus unburdened, they ran like deer before the swift advance.

Swarming through the streets of Pasay, the troops eagerly gathered up the abandoned rifles, piled them in heaps and set them on fire.

The bonfire had burned to ashes, and darkness was settling on the scene when the second battalion marched out toward San Pedro Macati, and the third battalion extended to the right until it nearly touched the bay, and here the line was ordered to remain for the night.

Except for an occasional shot, all resistance on the part of the enemy had disappeared,

and Reddy Fagin, in fragments of a captured Insurgent uniform, danced about his steaming cooking utensils as he prepared supper for the hungry men. In high spirits the soldiers gathered about the kitchen, as a mounted courier rode down along the line.

"What news?" shouted the company.

"Háven't got time to tell, unless you can let me have something to eat," responded the courier.

The rider was promptly hauled from his horse, and conducted to a place in the hungry line.

"Now, open up yer batteries," said Klondyke, as he presented the courier with a large tin cup full of coffee, and a meat can filled with fried bacon and chicken, for Reddy Fagin had managed to gather in a fine supply of poultry as he came up in rear of the skirmish line.

"Well," said the courier, "everything went off like a sky-rocket. General MacArthur pitched into them early this morning, and swept everything before him. A lot of mountaineers, head-hunters and dog-eaters came down from the north country, and

waded into the boys with bows, arrows and battle-axes. The wild men wore carabao skins across their chests because they had been told that these were a sure protection—an 'anting-anting,' which as a resister of bullets would make a piece of harveyized steel look like a soft pine board.

"Of course, the boys had to stop 'em. It wouldn't be healthy to get into close quarters with those axe swingers. Their chief was captured, and swears vengeance on the Insurgent leaders for sending in his people under false pretenses. It was a terrible thing, but it couldn't be helped. The field was littered with their dead and wounded before they were convinced that their anting-anting was not in good form.

"Is there a man here named Kelton?" suddenly asked the courier.

"Yes, my name's Kelton," responded our young recruit, as he looked anxiously at the news-bearer.

"Well, your brother, Corporal Jack Kelton, sends word that he is all right. The Nebraskas went at 'em in great style this morning, captured the blockhouses in front, charged

and took the reservoir, and they say they have taken the pumping-station too, but I'm not sure about that. Jack says that the first dead Filipino he found in the trenches which they captured, was old Pedro—what-you-may-call-him? Pedro—the 'mucho bueno American-isto,' who brought you down in the carromato."

"Where did ye jest now come from?" urged Klondyke.

"I came down from San Pedro Macati with an officer from corps headquarters. The officer brought down orders for your Colonel to send out a battalion along the road to connect with General King's brigade. As soon as your battalion moved out, I strolled down to see if I could find a meal. It's been a great day. General King had a fine fight. He swung around his right this morning until the Insurgents were closed in on the river, and the only road out was across the water. Walkin' was bad, and they say that a lot that left this shore haven't arrived on the other side yet. It was too bad. The Insurgents don't believe in giving quarter, and they thought they would get no quarter. They will soon find that it is better to be a prisoner

under the Americans than a free soldier in their own ranks.

"Well good-bye, boys, and many thanks. I have had the finest meal I ever tasted," shouted the courier as he swung into his saddle, and rode away in the darkness.

The moon had risen; the stars were twinkling in the clear sky, and the little town lay bathed in the mellow light. Far out to the front lay the outposts, but Douglas Atwell was not one of them. He had had his experience on the preceding night, which to his tired mind, seemed years ago. His company occupied the right of the line, and the gentle roll of the sea broke upon his weary ears like soothing music.

The town had been deserted upon the first exchange of shots, and the extreme edge of the village, marked by a thin string of abandoned shacks, formed the natural line of defense.

These shacks were divided up in regular order between the squads, and eagerly the boy climbed the ladder steps of Corporal Casey's shack, and stretched his blanket upon the floor, made of strips of bamboo lashed to

cross pieces of the same material. The shack was a huge bird's nest, six feet from the ground, supported by four uprights at its corners. The walls and roof were of nipa.

Lizards croaked in the rafters, and bats whirled through the open windows, and the soiled uniform clung to his aching limbs, yet, with happy heart, the boy closed his weary eyes and slept. He had had no sleep on the preceding night, and had passed through a fearful engagement—but he had done his duty manfully, and had won the respect of his comrades in arms.

Lying in the opposite corner of the same shack, his eyes wide open and sleepless, his brain active, Private Leland Jackson was struggling to form some plan of placing in his power the two men who had witnessed his cowardly conduct on the battle-field.

Back among the bamboo thickets, between Manila and the American line, thousands of Filipino dead lay motionless in the moonlight.

CHAPTER VI

AMBUSHED BY GUERRILLAS

When the troops rolled out to answer reveille roll call on February 6th, the scene was as quiet as a Sunday morning in a country church-yard. The outposts reported no signs of hostility in front, but over on the north side of the Pasig intermittent firing had been heard throughout the night.

The energetic signal corps had repaired the broken line back into the city, and an operator now sat at the telegraph key at the "Tribunal," and talked with a comrade at headquarters, and this is the story which the instrument ticked off to the operator, and which he promptly carried to the troops as they fell in line for breakfast.

It was well known that secret societies had been forming and arming for months within the city limits, but it had been impossible to exactly locate the arms, or to lay hands on the leaders of the conspiracy. The native

spies in the service of the government had produced evidence to show that the conspiracy was wide-spread and formidable, and the office of the Provost Marshal General was taking all possible precautions against surprise.

All day long the natives had swarmed in the market-places, or had gathered in small knots in the side streets. As darkness fell upon the oriental metropolis, it was reported that some portions of the city had been vacated, while other portions had been crowded beyond their normal capacity. Women and children gradually disappeared from the streets, and the only persons abroad were the white garbed men who halted timorously on the approach of American patrols and cried out, "amigos, senores, amigos" (friends, sirs, friends).

All remained quiet, however, until a bell in a church tower tolled out seven long, quavering notes to tell the waiting conspirators that the hour had come to strike. Then dark armed figures glided into the dimly lighted streets, and opened fire upon the American patrols.

The troops met the fire with impetuous

charges, and pursued the fleeing riflemen into the dark alleys and back streets where only the flash of the native's rifle revealed his whereabouts.

Simultaneously with the attack of the riflemen, incendiaries with burning torches had appeared on the outskirts of the city, and the sky was soon illumined with the flames from the burning shacks, while the white garbed natives rushed hither and thither, assuming a perfect imitation of the surprised and aggrieved citizen whose property was menaced by the ruthless outlaws in whose power he found himself. Thus, in their reckless enthusiasm, the American troops were drawn far apart, when the surprised and aggrieved citizens suddenly fell upon them with knife, pistol, and bolo which their long camisas had served to conceal.

Instantly the troops grasped the situation —everything in the streets was an enemy, and the struggle was brief but bloody. Before the fierce onslaught of the Americans the conspirators either perished or escaped into the scattered shacks on the outskirts of the town.

A ring of flame was licking up the nipa

shacks, but a half hour's heroic work arrested its progress.

Thus ended the first effort of the natives to destroy the city of Manila.

"Looks mighty nice an' Sunday-like, an' nobody'd think 'twas war times," said Klondyke Jones, "but I guess 'tain't best t' go much on appearances in this 'ere kintry. Bill," he continued, addressing the "Queer Fellow," "you better keep yer eye peeled fur thet 'ere pris'ner o' yourn. I'd as soon trust a black snake as thet 'ere critter after hearin' th' stories th' operator has been a-tellin' us."

Bill looked through his narrow lids, and ran his eyes up and down his prisoner, who was devouring a plate of hash with a fierce relish which the use of fingers instead of forks did not seem to impair. Then Bill walked over to the prisoner and shouted in his ear: —

"Say, any time ye want t' fight it out, I'm ready fur ye, an' don't ye forget it. Ye'll get a square deal, too, an' th' best man'll win."

The company roared with laughter, and the prisoner, thinking himself the hero of a joke, laughed with the rest.

"Bill, ye might jest 'bout as well hev told thet 'ere story t' Reddy Fagin's carabao. He'd understand jest as much," said Klondyke.

"Let my pris'ner alone," said Reddy. "He's a fine lad—works like a bull. I've had him peelin' taters all mornin' and he done bully."

Reddy was preparing for a long speech, but he was brushed out of the way by the Company Quartermaster Sergeant, who had immediate business to transact.

"Men," said he, "I am going in to the city to-day to bring out ammunition and rations, and the detail that is to go with me will be found on the company bulletin board. The detail will fall in down at the beach road. Be ready in half an hour."

Among the names that appeared on the Sergeant's list were those of Bill Smathers, Douglas Atwell, and Fred Russell, members of Corporal Casey's famous squad.

Douglas secured his rifle, belt, and canteen, and promptly proceeded to the designated rendezvous, where he sat down to await the rest of the detachment. He looked forward with pleasant anticipations to the quiet walk

along the beautiful, peaceful road that drew away among the banana-trees toward the city.

As he sat musing, the Regimental Quartermaster Sergeant came along the line with a number of bull carts from which he distributed picks and shovels to the companies. Orders had come to intrench the line, and the magnitude of the plan indicated that no further advance was to be made.

Douglas accepted the situation with a deep sense of regret, but he knew that the true spirit of the soldier required him to restrain his feelings. The regiment had won its first fight with unusual distinction, but now all signs indicated a quiet occupation of the trenches while other regiments would go out to finish up the campaign and win their laurels.

The rest of the detail slowly assembled at the crossroads, and as Sergeant Haller appeared with his bull carts, the escort drew away toward Manila. The road along which the escort was moving lay close to the beach where were stranded the wrecks of the Spanish fleet which had faced Admiral Dewey on

the 1st of the preceding May. The country here was flat and low lying—almost awash, and the whole surface was densely overgrown with nipa-palm and banana-trees. Shacks lined the road all the way to Malate, and were gathered in small clusters in clearings almost invisible from the main thoroughfare.

A native, naked to the waist, with a long bolo dangling from his side, emerged from the thicket with a newly cut piece of bamboo, and gazed lazily at the approaching escort. Then he walked 200 yards down the road and called loudly, and as the answer came from the heart of the jungle, he brushed the leaves aside, and disappeared.

"Ten riflemen and three carabaos," he had shouted, but to the Americans the words were meaningless.

So naturally, so unconsciously had the native played his part that the gentle prompting to caution which the incident inspired was allowed to go unheeded; for was not the escort within the lines in the territory of the non-combatants whom it was the duty of the escort to protect? The story which the operator had told should have sounded a warning,

but the American is slow to recognize duplicity.

Thus lost in quiet musings, the escort strolled into the dense banana swamps.

A ringing volley sounded almost in their faces, and a carabao rolled dead in the road, while a man in the rear of the escort clutched a bleeding arm. Before the escort could return the sudden fire, the guerrillas were gone, leaving the astonished little band wondering how so little damage had been done.

Quickly organizing a squad, Sergeant Haller started in hot pursuit, leaving the rest to guard the train. The guerrillas could be seen dodging through the underbrush, turning on their pursuers, and firing snap-shots from the hip. Russell, Douglas Atwell, and the "Queer Fellow" were pursuing closely, when they found themselves in a clearing occupied by a small group of houses. Bill Smathers heard a shot behind his back, and felt the juice of a banana-tree spatter in his face. He turned to see a native with scowling, malicious face, jumping back from the window of a neighboring shack. Smathers fired quickly, and ran to the ladder leading up to the house, at the

same time shouting to Douglas and Russell to rally to his support.

With one blow of the butt of his rifle, the "Queer Fellow" smashed down the light bamboo door, and stepped inside the shack, to find himself confronted by three bolomen, one of whom was the native whom they had seen in the road.

The suddenness of Bill Smathers' assault had destroyed his enemy's chance of complete concert of action, for the three bolomen were awkwardly bunched together as they rushed upon him. Firing instantly from the hip, he brought down the first by a shot through the shoulder, but the other two were too close for him to reload. The nearest of the two swung his bolo with terrific force, but instead of retiring, the "Queer Fellow" leaped at his antagonist to meet the blow. The bolo landed on the uplifted rifle, and bit it to the iron barrel, but the "Queer Fellow" was upon him, and the native was flung to the floor by the force of the collision. With one mighty leap Bill Smathers cleared his body, and bore down upon the remaining boloman. Feinting once to induce the native to lower his bolo, the

"Queer Fellow" swung forward the butt of his rifle to the man's chin, and as the man fell Bill pressed his rifle against his chest.

A shot sounded in the doorway, and Bill whirled about to see Douglas Atwell lowering his rifle, while on the floor lay the native who had fired at him from the window, and Smathers now saw what he had failed to observe as he entered the shack.

The room was divided into two compartments separated by a partition wall, behind which the rifleman had concealed himself when the struggle with the three bolomen began. He had crept from his hiding-place and was about to kill Smathers by a shot in the back when Douglas reached the ladder.

The "Queer Fellow" grasped young Atwell's hand as he realized the situation.

"Yer a brick, pal," said he, as a smile spread over his face. "I wunt forgit thet 'ere, I wunt. Ye saved my gizzard, an' if ye're ever in a close pinch ye kin depend on Bill Smathers t' stand by ye t' th' last ditch."

Bill uttered these words with an intensity of expression which left no doubt as to the

sincerity of his declaration, and then he turned abruptly upon the victims of his prowess.

"Git along, ye varmin," he roared, pointing down the ladder steps. "Wait there fur 'em, Russell, an' see thet ye don't let 'em go far if they run."

Fully expecting the barbarous death they would have inflicted under like circumstances, the four prisoners went trembling down the ladder as they muttered supplications for mercy. The two bolomen who had not been seriously injured were forced to carry the wounded men and place them upon the bull carts. Their wounds were carefully bound as the Americans laughed and discussed the encounter, humorously describing their sensations when the volley spat in their faces.

Sergeant Haller had returned to the train, proudly bearing a captured rifle which he had forced a guerrilla to drop, but he was too fat to duplicate the "Queer Fellow's" exploit of capturing the rifleman as well.

Only one man had been wounded, and there were the four prisoners and one rifle to compensate for that single wound of which the

wounded man felt exceedingly proud. The dead carabao was unhitched from his cart, and his burden transferred to the strongest animal, and the escort was about to resume its march when one of the men called out,

"Schmidt is not here, Sergeant."

"Well, where is he?" demanded the Sergeant, as he looked anxiously about the detachment.

"I don't know, sir," replied the soldier. "He rushed into the underbrush after the guerrillas, and I thought he had come back with the rest, but he isn't here."

"Corporal Jackson, keep your squad here to guard the train. The rest come on with me," shouted the Sergeant as he led the way back into the jungle. The party spread out into a thin line of skirmishers at twenty paces interval, shouting as they went. They had cleared the ground over which the skirmish of the morning had taken place, when Douglas came in sight of a shack in a second clearing far removed from the road. A native was setting fire to the thatched roof, and a number of bolomen were running from the shack. Their bodies were stained with blood, and one

carried a Krag-Jorgensen rifle, and the equipments of an American soldier.

One quick shot wounded the native and forced him to drop the rifle, but he kept his feet and continued to run. Douglas shouted at the top of his voice to his comrades and dashed for the shack, fully comprehending the terrible tragedy that had been enacted.

A bamboo rack used by natives for carrying cocoanuts, lay beside the shack, and this he seized and entered the burning building.

Upon the floor lay the naked body of Private Schmidt, mutilated almost beyond recognition. Assisted by one of his comrades, Douglas placed the body upon the rack and carried it from the burning shack as the flames crept down the walls to the black spot where the mangled body had lain.

The searching party had rallied around the shack as soon as the shots had been fired, and they now raked the underbrush into which the assassins had disappeared. The burning cinders rose from the roof of the shack and fell among the adjoining buildings, and in a few moments the whole settlement was ablaze.

Schmidt's body was carried silently back to

the train, and laid upon the bull cart alongside the prisoners whose wounds had been bandaged by the dead man's comrades.

"They're our prisoners, an' we've got t' treat 'em right," said the "Queer Fellow," "but if ever I meet 'em again in a fair an' square fight, hang me if I don't—if I don't ——"

The "Queer Fellow" could find no words to express his tumultuous thoughts. He swung his arms in the air, stamped the earth, and shook with rage.

"Th' ain't nothin' square in them 'ere critters," he muttered as the escort moved on toward Manila.

There were the prisoners and the captured rifle, but there was also the mangled body of their comrade, and the hearts of the little escort were full of bitterness. Natives with blank, expressionless faces came out on the roadside to gaze at the escort as it pulled into the suburbs with its gruesome burden, and among the spectators in white trousers and new clean camisas, were some who had assisted in the butchery of the American soldier.

The body was turned over for burial along-

side those who had fallen in front of blockhouse No. 14, and the prisoners were delivered to the Provost Guard.

Already the prisons were well filled. Nearly four hundred had been taken in the first day's fighting, and among them were many former residents of Manila whose friendship for the American cause had "been undoubted."

Sergeant Haller loaded his carts with the necessary rations and ammunition, and laid off his escort to escape the fierce heat of the midday sun. The streets were deserted, except for the guards who vigilantly awaited, with loaded rifles, for any signs of a new outbreak, but the native population was wrapped in indifferent sleep.

At three o'clock the escort resumed its march, and all were now keenly on the alert for any sign of the treacherous enemy, but the scene of the morning's skirmish was as quiet as the grave. The dead carabao lay undisturbed in the road. A new one had been secured in Manila, where all available animals had been collected in contemplation of the general advance of the army.

One man had been lost, another wounded, but the Americans had learned a valuable lesson.

The escort accomplished its return trip without further incident, and drew up in front of the company kitchen to discharge its load of rations. Reddy Fagin was there loudly discussing the merits of his new assistant with a young Englishman who had ridden out to Pasay to see the regimental commander on some business matters.

"Why, your valet is an Igorrote," said the Englishman. "He comes from the mountains not very far from Dagupan, the northern terminus of the railroad. He says that he and a number of his tribe were drafted by the Tagalog soldiers, who told them that the Americans were monsters who ate children; that Manila would be captured and looted, and the conquerors would be forever enriched by the spoils.

"Well, he has had enough fighting against the Americans, and he would like to be permitted to stay and work for his food."

"You're all right," shouted Reddy, slapping the Igorrote on the back. "I'll learn

you hablar English, sabe? Poco tempo you hablar English jist as good as I kin, sabe? Ask the lad what his name is," continued Reddy with great enthusiasm.

"Babong," said the Igorrote, in response to the Englishman's interpretation.

"Babboon! Babboon! Haha," shouted Reddy. "Babboon's right, but we'll call ye Bab fur short. Now, Bab, lay hold o' this tank o' slum-guggin, an' git ready fur sow-sow. Here come the boys fur supper."

The bugler was already sounding the mess-call and the men were enroute to the kitchen. A hard day's labor on the trenches had produced a fine appetite, and the hungry company ate heartily of the fare that Reddy had prepared, while Sergeant Haller related the story of the tragic death of "Dutchy" Schmidt; how the escort had rescued his body from the burning shack, and carried the mutilated corpse to Manila to be buried beside his comrades.

The old Sergeant's voice was choked with emotion as he turned with quivering lips to the company and said, "Boys, I would give all I ever owned for the chance to fight them

till the last breath leaves my body, but not a shot has been fired here to-day, and I don't believe we are going to have a chance."

"You'll get the chance, boys," said the operator, who had been an interested listener to the Sergeant's words. "There's trouble in plenty brewing on the north line, and General MacArthur has asked for this regiment, and there is every reason to believe that you will get orders to march before nine o'clock to-night."

CHAPTER VII

THE "CHINO"

THE report which the operator had brought to the company was soon verified by official orders directing the ——th Infantry, the North Dakotas, Captain Dyer's Battery of Light Artillery, and some troops of the Fourth Regular Cavalry, to withdraw from their position in the trenches, and to report to General MacArthur on the north side of the Pasig River.

Acting First Sergeant Tom Collins, who was performing the duties of his wounded superior, was never more enthusiastically received by his comrades, than that night as he walked along the line of shacks, and delivered the orders to Lieutenant Milton for the company to hold itself in readiness to march at 6 : 00 A. M.

"To march!" The ardent wish of the company was to be granted—they were again to meet the enemy. The unpleasant prospect of sitting through weary days and nights as

guard on the trenches, was dispelled as if by magic, for the words sounded of campaign, of action; and the delighted company prepared their scanty equipments with alacrity, and whiled away the rest of the evening listening to the "ole sojer," Klondyke Jones, relating the stories of the Indian campaigns through which the regiment had passed.

All was quiet along the line. The town had been almost wholly reoccupied by its inhabitants, and it required no inspired prophet to predict that, as the troops rolled over on the bamboo floors to sleep for the night, their slumbers would not be disturbed by the fire in front.

The men woke well rested from a calm and peaceful night's sleep, and while they were still at breakfast, the regiment of regular infantry designated to relieve the line marched into Pasay, halted, and dropped their rifles to the "order." This gallant regiment, recruited and reorganized after the arduous campaign in Cuba, had very recently arrived, and now presented itself in superb order to share the honors and dangers of the new battle-fields of the Republic.

Beside the gray-haired Colonel rode an Aide from corps headquarters to indicate the limits of the line over which the regiment was ordered to exercise control. A brief inspection, a ringing command, and two battalions marched away toward San Pedro Macati, while but one battalion was left to occupy the line which the ——th Infantry had formerly held.

The men of the two commands mingled freely together as the outposts were being relieved, and the stories of ambuscades, bolo encounters, and outpost attacks with which the "veterans" entertained the "newcomers" were sufficient to destroy the peaceful slumbers of the latter for many nights to come.

At exactly six o'clock the company fell into line, and marched away to form regiment at Pasay, and Private Douglas Atwell found himself once more shoulder to shoulder with his "good friend," Jackson, from whom there was no escape so long as official orders assigned them to the same squad.

As the regiment swung out leisurely at route step along the Singalon Road, a whistler at the head of the column struck up "A Hot

Time," and his comrades dropped into rough cadence with the refrain and swelled its volume by their own efforts. Talking, jesting and whistling, the column marched past the scene of the first day's fighting, and laughed over the narrow escapes from death which they had experienced. A friendly, honest, jovial lot, all seemed happy and care-free except Jackson ; for, despite the silence of Douglas Atwell and Klondyke Jones, small fragments of evidence had been accidentally brought to light which threw some doubts upon the truthfulness of Jackson's story to Corporal Casey, and Jackson was but coolly received by his college friends, who, in common with their rough comrades, heartily despised a shirk.

The regiment marched through the city, out past Sampolac, and took the road to La Loma Church, where it marched into its temporary position as part of the line facing Caloocan.

The town in front was strongly occupied by the Insurgents, whose numbers were rapidly increasing by reinforcements from the north, and preparations were already in

progress for making a vigorous assault upon them ; but some days' delay were necessary to bring up rations, ammunitions, etc., and to arrange the position of the troops upon the line.

Lieutenant Milton took advantage of the delay by ordering out his two young recruits for instruction in bayonet drill and the manual of arms. In these accomplishments, Douglas Atwell and Arthur Kelton were as yet hopelessly deficient; but they were apt, intelligent, and willing—not only willing, but eager to learn ; and Corporal Casey, the exacting martinet, was secretly proud of their work, though his face never permitted itself to betray more than qualified approval. That the term "recruit," would disappear from their names as soon as they were reported "fit for the company," was sufficent to spur their ambition were they not already of the mettle which derives pleasure from the faithful performance of duty for the pure love of serving faithfully.

But to Douglas Atwell the bayonet drill possessed a thrilling interest. Two days before he had stood upon the threshold of the

native shack when Bill Smathers had leaped into the midst of the bolomen, hurling them to the floor with two wonderful, sweeping blows of his rifle, and these motions were taught in the bayonet exercises.

That dexterity in the use of the rifle Bill Smathers had acquired by years of patient practice, but Douglas hoped, by assiduous labor, to attain to his comrade's wonderful agility and skill.

Babong, the Igorrote, watched the drill with much interest. He had been practically released from all restraint, and, as Reddy Fagin's assistant, gladly served the company in place of one of the Chinese coolies who had disappeared when the regiment marched for La Loma.

Babong belonged to a wild and untamed race. When a certain red flower bloomed in the springtime it had been the custom of his forefathers to go forth man-hunting, and he was most honored among his people who brought back at nightfall the greatest number of human heads as a sign of his bravery; and though this custom was rapidly giving way before the progress of civilization, yet

Babong's heart still throbbed with delight at the spectacle of a duel with stabbing or cutting weapons. Now, squatting on his heels, he uttered low exclamations of approval as Douglas danced backward and forward, thrust, parried, and lunged, or shot the butt of his rifle to the front and rear at an imaginary enemy.

As the drill closed, Babong jumped to his feet, and ran forward with a light piece of bamboo in his hand, and crossing it on Douglas Atwell's rifle, he assumed the attitude of a boloman preparing for an attack.

"Go ahead, rookie, give him a fight," shouted some of the men, and Douglas dropped his rifle to the "guard."

"Alang!" sang the Igorrote—or some similar sound—the war cry of the head hunters.

He rasped his imitation bolo along the rifle of his opponent for an instant, and then with wonderful quickness, dropped beneath the recruit's awkward guard, and sprang forward.

Only by the most desperate effort did Douglas prevent the "bolo" from touching his body, and forgetting the fact that his opponent was unprotected, he lunged out des-

perately with his bayoneted rifle; but Babong sprang aside with the lightness of a cat. With his left hand he seized the extended rifle and jerked it forward, while his right described a lightning circle, and the "bolo" rested on the side of Douglas Atwell's neck.

A shout of applause greeted the Igorrote's victory, and Reddy Fagin slapped him on the back and offered to bet his next month's pay on the Igorrote against any man in the company.

Still wondering how it had happened, Douglas felt himself suddenly thrust aside, his rifle snapped from his hands, and the "Queer Fellow" was in his place facing the Igorrote. Uttering the shrill war-whoop of the Sioux Indians to which his ears had listened on many a bloody field of the West, the "Queer Fellow" crouched into position preparatory to a bayonet encounter.

Babong looked up into the face of the fierce Americano who, in the jungle in front of blockhouse No. 14, had flung him about like a straw in the embrace of a hurricane; but the success of the first encounter had fired his blood. On he came to the attack, and twice Bill Smathers retreated, stopping the blows

A SHOUT OF APPLAUSE GREETED THE IGORROTE'S VICTORY

upon his rifle, and each time lowering his guard to invite a blow at the head. Seeing the opening, Babong sprang in, and swung his "bolo." Up went the "Queer Fellow's" rifle, as he sprang forward to meet the attack, and as the bamboo splintered upon the rifle, Babong rolled upon his back with such force that his heels rose in the air.

Babong sat up and rubbed his head in a perplexed manner, while the company laughed and shouted itself hoarse. Rising, Babong surveyed his strange opponent, who still crouched over his rifle, measuring the Igorrote over the point of his bayonet. Many a time in fierce combat in the mountain trails, Babong had looked down upon the dead face of his antagonist, and never before had he been forced to accept defeat.

"Go at 'im, Bab," shouted Reddy Fagin, thrusting a new bamboo stick into the Igorrote's hand. "Climb 'im, Bab, as if he wuz a cocoanut tree. Alang!"

Babong slowly resumed his position, but this time he moved lightly, cautiously,—as the mongoose moves about the hooded cobra whose strike he hopes to draw. The company

had formed a circle about the contestants, and the number of spectators had been augmented by the coolies from the kitchen. Unobserved by the men, a Chinese fruit vender, wandering along the line, had joined the coolies. He carried a small basket of fruit, slung by a tape from his neck, but his interest in the sale of his stock had suddenly vanished. He questioned the coolies about the Igorrote in the arena, and then stood with his arms folded across his chest, absorbed in the spectacle.

The contestants, still maneuvring for an opening, had worked over near him, and as Babong looked over his opponent's rifle, he saw the glittering eyes of the Chinese fruit vender upon him.

Babong stood still; his bamboo point dropped to the earth, and he turned away and squatted upon his haunches, and no amount of urging could induce him to resume the engagement.

The Chinese fruit vender had gone as naturally and as suddenly as he had come, and the company dispersed, wondering what had happened to Bab "t' make him slump like a whipped cur."

CHAPTER VIII

BABONG SERVES UNCLE SAM

FRED RUSSELL had been a close spectator of what had occurred, and his interest was thoroughly aroused, for he felt that a matter of unusual importance was involved in the incident.

"Douglas," said he as he laid his hand gently on the young man's shoulder, "do you know why Bab behaved so strangely?"

"No, I can't imagine," answered the boy blushing, for it was the first time that Russell had addressed him in this friendly and familiar manner, and though pleased, he was likewise embarrassed.

"Well," continued Russell, "I happened to be standing close to the coolies when a Chinaman joined them, ostensibly to watch the fun. He had a little basket of fruit slung about his neck, but no real fruit vender would come out with that five pound load. He was not a full-blood—a Chinese mestizo, apparently,

and one of some standing, for his hands were as fine and delicate as a woman's. I saw him talking to the coolies, and clearly he was asking questions about Bab. No doubt he found out that Bab was not a prisoner, but was working for us and was willing and anxious to stay. Bab recognized him sure as fate. There is no doubt that startled look indicated some past relationship between himself and that slick Chino which Bab would like to forget."

"And what conclusion do you arrive at?" queried Douglas, deeply interested.

"Firstly, that the Chino is a spy—probably an Insurgent officer of some rank. It is well known now that the Insurgents are one day with us as innocent civilians in white, and the next day they are in front of us either in uniform or in white, and that every day they openly boast of the duplicity they can practice with perfect impunity on the 'fool Americanos.'

"Secondly, let us adjourn to the 'sitio de Bab' (Bab's roost) and hold a post-mortem on the 'cuerpo'" (body).

"Good, but we will have to probe gently,"

responded Douglas, as they started off together toward the kitchen to which Bab had retired.

Babong was discovered scouring the kitchen pans with a bamboo stick daubed with sand, and the perspiration which stood out on his forehead indicated a state of great mental perturbation. Russell first interviewed the Chinos, who, true to their kind, professed complete ignorance, denied that they had ever seen a fruit vender, and finally admitted everything that Russell had suspected.

He then secured a rifle, fixed the bayonet, and faced Douglas, who began an awkward imitation of the Igorrote's motions.

"Milord smiles," said he, as Babong lay down his work and turned an amused look upon the clumsy imitators in his beloved art. At last he rose and began showing Douglas how to use the bolo. Thus the opportunity came, and Russell led him dexterously on.

Babong hesitated no longer, for he had finally resolved to cast his lot with the Americans.

Pulling off the bandage that he wore about his head, his long black hair fell in shaggy

ringlets about his ears, and pointing proudly to these distinctive locks, he said, "Igorrote"; and raising his hand to the north he indicated his native mountains. By signs, symbols and gestures, he managed to convey the impression that the Chinese fruit vender was the "Coronel de Insurrectos" who had drafted him for service in the Insurgent ranks, who had that day discovered his willing service in the American camp, and had then signaled him over Bill Smathers' shoulder that he, Babong, must die.

"I am not surprised that the poor Igorrote wilted," said Russell. "I have read of many cases of the long pursuit and final assassination of natives who have been condemned by the secret societies. His only hope now is in sticking to the Americans."

Babong looked appealingly from one to the other, and encouraged by the friendly look in their fearless faces, his courage returned.

He opened a small pouch which he usually carried on a belt about his waist, and drew forth a small object wrapped in a banana leaf. This he laid upon a bench and unfolded with

an anxiety that indicated an expectation of important developments. Beneath the banana leaf was a second covering—a piece of the parched skin of a python, and within was a small piece of quartz rock through which ran a thread-like stain of the red oxide of iron. Babong scrutinized it carefully before the light and then turned a reassured face to his very interested audience. The stone had conveyed a message of safety to Babong, for this was his anting-anting. He clasped it to his heart, and shook his fist in the direction in which the Insurgent spy had gone, for so long as his anting-anting showed the clear scarlet thread, like a living artery, it was Babong's implicit faith that no harm could come to him. Either the stone or the skin of the python would have guaranteed him almost supreme protection, but possessing both, he felt himself invulnerable except against an enemy endowed with supernatural powers, provided he did not ignore or misinterpret the warnings of his anting-anting.

He had secured both these precious trophies under the most unusual circumstances. Alone and hungry in the mountains, he had

come suddenly upon a huge python. Escape was impossible; either he or the python must die, and he had slain the monster reptile, had eaten his flesh, and had carried home the best steaks from his back to make a dainty flesh-pot for his aged parents.

Again, when the "red flower" was in bloom, he had gone abroad and had been attacked by Bontoc, the most famous head hunter of an adjacent settlement, and though Bontoc was armed with a shield and protected by his enchanted lance, yet Babong had slain him. The fight had occurred in the evening twilight. From the rocks on which his dead enemy lay, Babong broke off a fragment and carried it to his home, and in the morning, his eyes beheld the thin scarlet thread, the mystic sign, he believed, of his enemy's life-blood.

Babong quivered with excitement as he performed the pantomime by which his American listeners were made to understand the two great occasions on which he had won his anting-anting.

"If Bab remains faithful to us, his belief in this anting-anting will lead him to do some wonderful things," remarked Russell,

as Babong rolled up his precious charm, returned it to his pouch, and buckled on his belt.

"We must make him feel that we will protect him from danger," responded Douglas, as he patted his rifle and indicated to Babong that they would fight for his safety. Babong nodded his head in grateful acknowledgment, and the two young Americans, pondering on the strange things they had seen and heard, left the Igorrote to his duties as Reddy Fagin's assistant.

Douglas Atwell was profoundly impressed by the events of the morning. Not only had he been permitted a glimpse into the wild and savage life of this oriental world, but he had been forced to realize that this wonderful Igorrote possessed a knowledge of an art which experience had already taught him would decide for life or death in a hand to hand encounter.

During the days following these events, Douglas patiently waited about the kitchen until Reddy Fagin could dispense with the services of his assistant, and then, despite the languishing heat, he engaged Babong, as long

as he would work, in fierce practice with the "bolos."

Every difficulty gives away before the genius for work, and Douglas Atwell found that he was rapidly acquiring the art which at first had seemed so difficult to master. The delay in completing the program of attack had given him three precious days for practice, and he now had Babong in front of his bayonet driving him about the kitchen with such alacrity as to threaten the safety of the bean soup, when Corporal Casey appeared and ordered him "t' get ready fur a little brush wid th' inimy."

Douglas promptly joined his squad, and in a few moments the regiment had taken its place in the trenches facing Caloocan.

While hostilities had partially ceased on the line from which they had come, here the storm was gathering with redoubled energy. The whole line of railroad north of Manila lay through Insurgent territory, and each arriving train brought reinforcements from the north to swell the Insurgent ranks. Aguinaldo, the Commander-in-Chief of the Insurgent forces, was located at Malolos, the new

capital of the revolutionary government, and the Insurgent chieftain hoped to crush the American line before the arrival of reinforcements which were daily expected from the States.

Unlike the field in front of blockhouse No. 14, the country here was a flat rice-field intersected here and there with a thin bamboo hedge, and terminating in a rather dense undergrowth in front of the city which the Insurgents held in strong numbers.

All the arrangements for attack were complete on the afternoon of February 10th. From a high church tower communication was established between the army and the naval vessels lying close in to the shore at a point from which the roof-tops of Caloocan were visible.

At about three o'clock the navy opened fire with their heavy guns, and the Third Artillery over on the left joined in the assault. The distant boom of the naval guns could be plainly heard, and the eye could follow the little thin blue line of smoke which followed the shell as it rose on its three-mile course and fell with terrific explosion somewhere along the Insurgent line.

For a half hour Douglas Atwell lay upon his arms, and watched the wonderful, spectacular scene, and then he heard the now familiar tones of the bugle, commanding an advance as the navy ceased firing.

The crack of the rifle sounded puerile and toy-like as compared to that majestic roar by which it had been hoped to demoralize and stampede the Insurgent troops. Corporal Casey's squad was advancing in fine order under its indefatigable leader, but as Douglas glanced along the swaying, curving line, he caught the eye of Fred Russell searching the ranks.

"We are all here," said Russell, "that is, Skaguay, Klondyke, me and the 'Queer Fellow,' and there is your friend, Kelton—but our dear college chum, Jackson, is absent. Went on sick report about twelve o'clock—the heat, you know."

"Heat again," thought Douglas, but he said nothing. Jackson was a boy, he thought, who might be left to his own devices.

The line had advanced some distance, and the enemy's bullets were raising the dust in spurts from the hard, baked rice-fields, and as

they rose, flattened and deformed, they whistled through the air with a most terrifying sound, but with each foot gained in advance, Douglas Atwell felt a fiercer desire to close upon his enemy. He forgot his surroundings, his personal dangers, and with mind keen upon the work before him, he fired with the discrimination of a veteran.

The lines had swept across the open rice-fields, and had penetrated the underbrush behind which the shacks of Caloocan lay clustered, when he felt a sharp grip upon his shoulder, and looked up into the face of Lieutenant Milton.

"Atwell," said the young officer, "go back to the trenches as fast as you can; bring out the Chinos with the litter, and make them carry Sergeant Davis back to the dressing station. Be quick! He is bleeding to death."

Douglas saluted, and dashed back across the rice-fields, determined to accomplish his mission at any cost. As he cleared the trench at a single bound, he found the Chinos huddled together, lying flat upon their faces. On he sped to the kitchen, and seized the com-

pany litter from the bull cart where Reddy Fagin and Sergeant Haller awaited the moment to advance.

"Come on, Reddy," shouted Douglas, as he gasped for breath, "Sergeant Davis is wounded, and bleeding to death. Help me drive the Chinos forward with the litter, and when they come back, see that they get him to the doctor."

Reddy was beside him at a single bound, and together they rushed with the litter among the Chinos.

"Git up here," shouted Reddy, as he pulled two of the startled Chinos to their feet, "git up an' fight fur yer country."

"Vamoosey" (go ahead), shouted Douglas as he clapped the litter on the Chino's shoulder, and pressed home his meaning with the point of his hot rifle, while Reddy Fagin brandished a huge bolo which he had captured in the assault on blockhouse No. 14. It was no time for formalities—a human life was in great peril.

Yielding to the sudden onslaught, the Chinos jumped over the trench and ran to the front like stampeded deer, too frightened to

heed the bullets that swept the plain. It was a perilous dash, without the protection of even a shrub to afford a cover, but the space was crossed without harm, and Douglas regained the underbrush where he knew the body of the Sergeant would be found.

After a few moments' search he came upon the young collegian, lying in a pool of his blood. Laying him gently upon the litter, Douglas bound his wound as rapidly as he could, and then commanded the Chinos to return with their burden, and though the bullets ripped through the dense foliage, the Chinos courageously lifted the body and started on the return trip across the bullet-swept rice-field.

As the litter bearers vanished along the edge of the underbrush, Douglas was astounded to see the lithe figure of the Igorrote gliding toward him among the bamboo. He was equipped with canteen, belt, and Krag-Jorgensen rifle taken from a member of the company whose dead body lay upon the rice-fields.

At sight of Douglas, Babong uttered the war-cry of the head hunters, and shaking out his long black hair, now freed of his head bandage,

he laid his hands upon his great chest and cried out exultingly, "Me, Igorrote; me, Americano!"

There was a dignity in the bearing of this wild tribesman of the mountains which commanded the respect of the chivalric young soldier, and Douglas Atwell extended his hand to grasp that of the fearless Igorrote who was about to risk his life in the American ranks.

Douglas pointed toward the front from which the sounds of battle came to them, and the expression of his face asked the Igorrote if he wanted to join the strife. For answer Babong lead the way through the jungle with the lightness and noiselessness of a tiger on the track of his prey.

The line had advanced to within 300 yards of the outskirts of the town, and Douglas and Babong joined it as the men rose to the charge, and swept like a tumultuous sea over the broken Insurgent line.

High upon the captured trench Babong stood, shouting his fierce war-cry, shaking his black hair and firing upon the retreating enemy.

The line forged forward into the town, and

fought from house to house, until the enemy was swept through the town and across the rice-fields to the north; and everywhere Babong followed and fought with a reckless courage which challenged the admiration of the bravest in the ranks—for underneath the American cartridge belt was the pouch containing the magic quartz rock with its thread of scarlet.

Babong had forever divorced himself from his race, though not from his tribe, and had irrevocably committed himself to the American cause.

When the regiment assembled in the town square, each company brought its Tagalog prisoners who had not been able to escape the valiant charge of the line. As they squatted on their haunches, their nervous eyes beheld the flowing locks of Babong who had fought with the Americans, and had helped to make them captive, and low down in their throats, as a fowl utters its warning of the presence of a hawk, a low guttural tone ran among the prisoners :—"Igorrote! Igorrote!"

That night a council of Insurgent officers met within a block of corps headquarters in

the city of Manila. A Chinese mestizo, Colonel of guerrillas, presided at the meeting, and listened, with glittering eyes, to the story of spies from Caloocan ; and then he designated three natives to accomplish the assassination of Babong, the Igorrote traitor.

CHAPTER IX

THE TREE, THE MORO, AND THE LETTER

FOUR days had passed since the capture of Caloocan, and events were developing rapidly. General MacArthur's troops had enveloped the captured territory with a line of entrenchments extending roughly from Malabon on the left to the pumping-station on the right, and he was now prepared to reconnoitre the country in front, and to determine the enemy's strength.

In front of the American lines the Insurgents labored assiduously upon a new system of intrenchments, while by night their prowling bands harassed the outposts with a sniping fire. Each day had brought to the front more Insurgent troops to stem the American advance, and their spirits ran high; for Luna, the Ilocano, was among them,—Luna, the bravest fighter, the most intrepid leader in the Insurgent ranks.

And now the time had come to reach out and grope along the enemy's front for the point of greatest weakness, and then upon this point to drive home a fatal blow.

Designated to execute the first part of this program, Company M, ——th Infantry, lay upon its arms at 3 : 00 A. M., on the morning of February 14th, and as the first gray streaks of dawn flickered in the east, the men crept over the trenches and moved out to the front.

Bayonets and bayonet scabbards had been removed, and all the metallic contacts of the canteen and haversack had been wrapped in cloth to prevent the slightest noise; but the American soldier is a frank, reckless, heavy-footed stumbler, who knows not the meaning of a creeping advance. The men fell headlong over the rice paddies, and their fearful tread seemed to shake the earth, but in spite of it all, the company safely crossed the open space in front of the lines, and reached a small ravine which led up close to the enemy's works. Here the company awaited the dawn before attempting a further advance, and as the light began to creep through the dense

foliage, Lieutenant Milton once more led the way along the ravine.

After fifteen minutes' cautious advance, he raised his hand to signal a halt. It was clear enough now to see that the company was on a trail that ran down the ravine to a clump of bamboo from which much tormenting fire had been poured into the workers on the trenches in the past three days.

Lieutenant Milton now moved to the edge of the underbrush, and paused beside an immense tree, the top of which was visible for many miles around. Beyond lay an open space, rising to the position of the enemy's trenches, which were partially concealed behind a hedge of bamboo-trees and other small shrubbery. It was impossible to cross the open space unobserved, and yet Lieutenant Milton's position afforded a very imperfect view of the Insurgents' dispositions.

"Mebbe some un cud skin up thet 'ere tree," whispered Klondyke Jones, as he saw Lieutenant Milton surveying the huge trunk with its lowermost limbs swaying many feet above his reach. "I've clumb harder uns than thet ten year ago, but th' ile's been sweated

an' cooked out o' my ole jints since I cum t' this 'ere kintry, an' there ain't no use tryin' anything like thet 'ere no more."

"If you can hoist me to the lower limb, I think I can go the rest of the way," quickly responded Douglas Atwell.

Lieutenant Milton glanced at the eager boy. "It is a dangerous feat," said he in a low tone. "We are not more than 100 yards from the Insurgents, and you are likely to be discovered, and you know what discovery means at that range. If you are very anxious to go up, I will not prevent you, but should the enemy open fire, don't delay in getting down."

Douglas felt his face grow pale, and his fingers twitch as he hastily pulled off his shoes and laid aside his equipment. Then he unbuckled the slings from his canteen and haversack and wrapped them about his waist, and drawing a roll of paper and a lead pencil from his haversack, he thrust them into the front of his blue shirt.

"I'm ready," said he, and without a word Klondyke Jones, Skaguay McFadden and young Kelton placed themselves below the limb of the tree. Lieutenant Milton handed

him a pair of field-glasses, and slinging these across his shoulder, he placed his feet in Kelton's hand, sprang to the shoulders of his comrades, and stood erect; but the limb was still a little beyond his reach.

"Raise your right hand, Klondyke," said Douglas, and as the good "ole sojer" obeyed, Douglas rested his feet in the strong uplifted palm, and sprang to the limb. Raising his feet forward and upward, he drew himself up across the limb, and crawled in close to the massive tree trunk, while his comrades dropped down below and very softly filled their magazines in readiness for any signs of activity in front.

"All right so far," whispered Lieutenant Milton, "go ahead."

Keeping as well concealed as possible, Douglas climbed from limb to limb until he had reached the highest point to which it was safe to go, and then he paused and looked out toward the enemy's lines.

The whole country lay revealed. There was the line of unfinished intrenchments protecting thousands of sleeping Insurgents, while all along the line were little groups

squatted about steaming pots of rice which they were preparing for the morning meal.

To the right, El Deposito was visible, and the winding course of the Pasig was clearly defined, though only at points could a glimpse be secured of the swift rushing stream. Even the position of the pumping-station, the San Mateo River, and the basin of the Laguna de Bay could be outlined, while on the left, the railroad, two brilliant lines of steel, glittered among the tropical foliage until it was swallowed up in the rougher country many miles to the north.

Douglas Atwell gazed for one enraptured moment, and then, by means of the straps, he lashed himself to the limbs of the tree, and drew out his pad and pencil. One natural gift he possessed—he was a natural sketch artist. No one had taught him; no other member of his family possessed the same faculty, and that "Douglas had been born under a lucky star," was the only explanation which had ever been offered to account for his genius. Sketching had been a means of amusement, a useless and unappreciated pastime, by which he had entertained his boy

friends, with humorous studies of country life. But now he had a subject worthy of his best efforts, and with rapid masterful strokes he sketched the scene in front; and could Douglas Atwell have looked into the future, he would have blessed the fate that had endowed him with this precious gift.

The gaps in the unfinished line of intrenchments had been plotted, the points of weakness laid bare, and the general landscape was nearly completed, when a sound from below attracted his attention. A native had suddenly emerged from the underbrush on the left, had placed a bamboo ladder against the side of the tree, and was slowly ascending to the lower limbs. Apparently he was a sentry designated to take his post of observation in the tree-top.

The man's sudden appearance had taken all by surprise, and Douglas could see that his comrades were now waiting for the native to climb beyond the chance of escape.

Douglas, breathlessly watching the ascent, forgot to properly guard all his paraphernalia, and Lieutenant Milton's field-glasses slipped from his shoulder, and fell with a resounding

thump on the top of the native's head. The blow overturned him, and he rolled to the ground, jumped to his feet, and before the astonished soldiers could secure him, he ran shouting toward the Insurgent trenches.

It was not necessary to urge Douglas to descend. He was clambering from limb to limb with a haste that threatened a duplication of the native's tumble, when the Insurgents swarmed over the trenches and opened fire upon the tree.

Under the protection of the terrific fire which his comrades opened on the enemy, Douglas was able to make the perilous descent and to swing off in safety to Klondyke Jones' arms; and as he pulled on his shoes, the "ole sojer" adjusted his equipments and stood waiting with his rifle.

"Magazine's full, so's th' chamber."

"Thank you, Klondyke," returned Douglas as he sprang into his place and opened fire; but despite the energy of the squad, it was impossible to create the impression of an attack by a large force, and the Insurgents swung out from the right and left, enveloping the flanks.

Lieutenant Milton gave the signal to retire. Back through the ravine the company ran, but once upon the open, they re-formed and retired by platoons in perfect and machine-like order.

"Good exercise 'fore breakfast, an' no one hurt," said Klondyke, as the company marched back across the trenches. "Thet 'ere's th' right kind o' a fight. It's like 4th o' July in a mining town 'cept thet then there'd be buryin' on both sides."

"Klondyke," said Douglas, "did you see that fellow who came out with spangles all over his body?"

"Yes. Thet 'ere's a coat o' mail, an' th' chap must be a Moro. He had a helmet, shield, and a big bolo as bright as a razor, an' he cum chargin' along as if he wuz lookin' fur b'ar. They say them fellers is dangerous, an' he looked it. I've heard thet when they git in hard luck, they take an oath t' run amuck, an' t' die wallowin' in Christian blood. The number o' Spaniards they've slashed up would fill a barn."

Corporal Casey interrupted this interesting narrative by directing Atwell to report to

Lieutenant Milton at his tent. Douglas readily guessed the subject on which his company commander desired to see him, and entered the tent with his sketch in his hand.

"I am ready now to hear your report," said Lieutenant Milton. "Tell me exactly what you saw."

Douglas described the scene in clear, brief terms, and then added, "I sketched the scene on this sheet of paper which I took up with me. If it is of any use I can complete it in ink, and make the important features a little more pronounced."

As Lieutenant Milton's eyes ran over the paper his face took on an expression of deep interest. He had performed work at West Point which had won him high rank in his class as a draftsman, but his very best efforts were poor as compared to this hasty sketch from a tree-top.

"Where did you learn to do this work?" he asked after several minutes' close observation of the unfinished map.

"I never learned at all, sir. I have always been able to sketch, I think."

"Sign your name and rank across the cor-

ner of the map, and I will forward it with my report to General MacArthur, and will invite attention to the service you have performed. I congratulate you, Atwell. Try to maintain the high standard you have set."

"I will try, sir," said Douglas simply, as he saluted and turned away, but his heart was thrilled with rapture, for there was no other person in the world whose esteem he more highly prized than that of the gallant little officer who had led the assault on blockhouse No. 14.

The company was at breakfast when Douglas returned, and after the meal the tired men lay down in their tents, and slept until nearly midday.

There was no longer any fire from the bamboo thicket, but as the sun crept down toward the western horizon in the afternoon, a small black speck was visible in the tree-top from which Douglas Atwell had drawn his sketch that morning. From this point of vantage, a native outlook was searching the American camp with a powerful field-glass, or watching for signals from the church towers of Manila.

Outposts were to be posted at 7:00 P. M.,

and Private Atwell was once more on the roster for that duty; but as he fell in with his comrades, he no longer felt the trepidation of a young recruit, but rather the confidence of a veteran, for men age rapidly on battle-fields.

After inspecting the detail, Lieutenant Milton addressed the men as follows:—"The position of the outposts will be changed for to-night, as I am confident the enemy has located the positions of the old ones. I will accompany the details to the new posts, and I want to impress upon you that unusual vigilance will be necessary. The company had to retreat under fire this morning, and though we were under orders to do so, the natives will gain a lot of confidence, and bands are sure to be prowling about to-night. Among the Insurgents, a Moro in coat of mail was seen by many in the company, and he is liable to be looking for trouble. So exercise great caution."

As Douglas Atwell marched across the trenches, he was surprised to see Jackson among the rest. The surgeon had returned him to duty, Lieutenant Milton had relieved

him as company clerk, and he was therefore compelled to face the routine of the private in ranks.

Lieutenant Milton accompanied Corporal Casey's outpost along the usual path, but 100 yards out, he inclined to the left, and placed the outpost in a small group of banana-trees, and ordered the corporal to place the sentinel fifty yards to the front on a trail that led to the ravine which the company had explored that morning.

Kelton was the first sentinel on post, and he was to be followed by Jackson and Atwell in the order named.

Corporal Casey ordered his men to sleep while he went forward to watch with Kelton, while Klondyke Jones was to relieve the Corporal at midnight.

The first two hours passed very quietly, and Kelton was relieved by Jackson at 9 : 30 P. M. Douglas dreamily remembered the young collegian buckling fast his cartridge belt as Jackson went on post, and then he fell off into sound sleep. His next impression was that of some one screaming in a mortal agony of fear, and he sprang to his feet, rifle in

hand, and dashed toward the spot where Jackson had gone on post.

Again came the scream, and he was conscious of a rush of feet toward him in the darkness. In the dim light he discerned Jackson running for his life, pursued by a mob of bolomen; and among the pursuers, was the Moro in coat of mail, helmet, shield and kampilan.[1]

Atwell fired and some one fell, just as the flying mob reached him, and he saw the wicked bolos cutting at the frantic soldier. In another instant Jackson must surely be killed.

In sheer desperation, Douglas sprang in front of the pursuers, and with all his strength, he swung the butt of his rifle. The blow landed, but he was knocked down by the tumbling native, and the rest passed him. As he rose to his feet, he heard the shots of Corporal Casey, Klondyke Jones, and Kelton, as they opened fire on the remnants of the pursuing mob; and before him stood the Moro, crouching, as Babong was wont to do; but instead of the harmless bamboo stick, the

[1] Kampilan—A long, heavy, straight-edged weapon.

Moro held in his hand the razor-edged kampilan, with one blow of which he could sever the American's head from his body.

Douglas might have shouted for help as Jackson had done, but instead he sprang at the Moro with his bayoneted rifle, and lunged with such fury that the native retreated, evading each lunge with the agility of a cat. But once did the Moro attempt to swing his kampilan, and then he saved himself from the return thrust, only by dexterously catching the point of Atwell's bayonet on the edge of his shield.

Douglas had now forced him back to the perpendicular bank of the little stream which the trail crossed, and one more desperate effort would end the duel. With all his energy Douglas threw himself behind a lunge straight at the chest. The blow was caught upon the centre of the shield, but the Moro was hurled backward over the bank, and his kampilan dropped at the young soldier's feet. Seizing the weapon, Douglas waited for some sign of the whereabouts of his enemy, but all was quiet below. Douglas had won the first encounter with an enemy whom he would

soon learn to fear as no other man in the Philippine Islands.

As Douglas walked back toward the position of the outpost, he heard the anxious queries of Corporal Casey :—" Where's Atwell ? Where did the lad go ? "

" Sneaked," he heard Jackson say. " I saw him hiking out when the bolomen drove me in. You better look in the bushes."

" Thet 'ere's a lie, Jackson, an' ye know it. I seen Atwell pitchin' fur th' bolomen when ye wuz squawkin' like a scared hen. If Atwell ain't here, he's hurt, an' ye think he's hurt, an' thet's why ye dare say he sneaked."

" I am here, Jackson," said Douglas as he came up to the group, and tossed the captured kampilan upon the ground. " ' Sneaked ' is a nasty word. I wouldn't use it if I were you." Turning to Corporal Casey, he added, " There is a wounded native back there, Corporal."

" The varmint doesn't deserve bein' looked afther, but anyway, Kelton, you an' Jones go an' help Atwell fetch 'im in, an' we'll see if there's life yit in 'im."

The trio started off to obey the order, and soon found the native unconscious, but still

alive. As Jones and Kelton picked him up, a small parcel of letters fell from the pocket of his white camisa, and Douglas picked them up, thrust them into his pocket, and lent a helping hand to his comrades. The wounded native was dressed entirely in white and bore no indications of belonging to the armed Insurgent forces; but the Americans had long since learned that friendly garments were no sign of friendship among the natives, but rather added to the danger of an enemy.

When the group rejoined the Corporal, a detachment had arrived from the company to give support to the outpost, but their services were not needed, and the wounded man was turned over to them to be conveyed to the hospital.

All was now quiet along the line, and the rest of the night was spent in eager expectancy but without unusual incident.

Douglas completely forgot the parcel of letters that had fallen from the native's pocket, until he had been relieved from duty the next morning, and was about to enjoy a few hours of well earned sleep. Then, he drowsily drew the parcel from his pocket, and wondered

what he was to do with the matter, as the owner had expired during the night without regaining consciousness.

Douglas glanced over the papers. There was a cedula, or registration card, and a pass in which the native declared himself to be a peace-loving subject of Uncle Sam; next, was a document with an official look but apparently written in the incomprehensible Tagalog language.

The last article was a sealed envelope, but the address across the face sent a thrill tingling into the finger-tips of the young soldier. The envelope read: —

Señor Quicoy Siongco,
Chinese Merchant,
——Escolta, Manila.

Douglas hesitated for a moment, and then tore open the letter, and drew forth a sheet of paper similar to that ordinarily used by the company. The letter ran as follows:—

In Camp near La Loma, Feb. 13.

COLONEL QUICOY SIONGCO:

Meet me, if you can, on February 22d, at midnight on the Lico Road, in reer of our

lines. Bring six of your men all dressed as laborers of some sort, and I will conduct you to a tent where you may secure five of the company rifles, and several thousand rounds of ammunition.

No danger. Bring the necessary funds for this service.

Very respectfully,

DOUGLAS ATWELL,
Private, Co. M, ——th Inf.

The perspiration stood out in big drops on the young soldier's forehead as he carefully folded this letter and pinned it inside his blue flannel shirt.

CHAPTER X

REVELATIONS AND DOUBTS

For hours, Douglas Atwell lay with aching head, vainly striving to formulate a plan of action. As yet, only one fact was clear—that some one had assumed his name, and was holding a traitorous correspondence with the enemy; but was the assumption of his name merely for the purpose of concealing the identity of the culprit, or for the purpose of bringing about the capture of this letter, thus branding Douglas as the traitor?

Had the letter fallen into the hands of any other American soldier what would have been the consequence? This thought made the young man tremble with anxiety, for the existence of one letter in the hands of the enemy suggested the existence of others which a lucky shot, or the deliberate efforts of the conspirator might bring to light.

In vain he tried to sleep, but his brain was burning, his mind repeating over and over

again the words of the miserable letter which he had carefully tucked away in the folds of his blue-flannel shirt. He listened intently to every footstep that approached, half expecting a detail from the guard to pounce upon him, and drag him away to the guard-house; and if this should happen, his present attitude of concealing the captured letters would stand as incriminating evidence against him. If only as a protection against accusation, he realized that he must confide in a friend, and with this intention, he rose and walked to the tent of Fred Russell.

"Hello, Douglas," said he cheerfully, "I hear you had a jolly time last night while on guard. Our old friend, Leland Carlysle, held up the honor of his alma mater, I hear, in his usual excellent form. They tell me you ran amuck, and had a little affair with the bayonets à la Babong. How about it?"

"Yes, yes, we had a lively night," said Douglas rather impatiently, for the thought of the letter had driven every other impression from his mind, "but I have something important to tell you. Can you spare me a few moments?"

"A week, if you like."

Assuring himself that no one was about, Douglas related the manner in which he had come into possession of the parcel of letters, and then handed to Russell the crumpled note which had caused him so much mental anguish.

When the young collegian had completed the perusal of the note, he stroked his chin and smiled.

"Is there any one who has a grudge against you?"

"Yes, but nothing to warrant treachery of that sort."

"There are some people whom I know who have a habit of doing nasty things, and of thinking of the consequences afterward; but perhaps you have some way of tracing the writer. Did you find any other papers on the native?"

"Yes," said Douglas anxiously, as he produced the rest of the documents, "but I did not think them of any importance."

Russell read the matter over very carefully, wrapped the papers in a folder, and wrote across the back: "Papers believed to be of

importance found on the body of an Insurgent who was killed on the night of February 14th, while he was trying to get through the lines."

"Now, take them to Lieutenant Milton, and tell him that you believe the papers to be very important, and tell him how they came into your possession. Just one moment, son," continued Russell, "while I write down for future reference the names on the pass, cedula, etc. There, now, I wouldn't say anything to Lieutenant Milton about that letter. We can settle that among ourselves."

When Douglas returned from his interview with the company commander, Russell had endorsed on the back of the letter a certificate of the time and circumstances under which the letter had been shown him, and had signed it with his official signature.

"Should any question arise in the future as to your conduct," said he, "that will show how you stood on the matter. Now, tell me what Lieutenant Milton did."

"He looked over the papers," said Douglas, "put them in an envelope, and sent them forward with a courier who was ready to leave with mail for Manila."

"Good," said Russell. "If the papers contain anything of importance the translation will bring it out. Now, let us look at some of the features of the case," said Russell, as he looked over what he had written in his note-book. "Quicoy Siongco. That sounds like chop-sticks, don't you think? Doesn't Quicoy Siongco, Chinese merchant, strike you as an old acquaintance?"

"I thought of the Chinese fruit-seller," answered Douglas, "the fellow who nearly turned Babong white with fright the day he was having a bayonet bout with the 'Queer Fellow.'"

"The very man," responded Russell, "and now we have the gentleman's address. Moreover, we have the name on that pass, Ramon Pacheco, and the address of the alleged owner appears on the cedula. That is a working basis, and we may be able to do a little investigation on our own account."

Douglas listened with rapt attention, and his spirits gradually rose as the situation changed from a trembling defensive to an energetic aggressive. He felt no desire to punish, but rather an overpowering indignation, and a fierce purpose of confronting the

author of this piece of perfidy with the evidence of his crimes, and of thus holding him powerless to do further harm.

"Let us ask Lieutenant Milton for permission to go into Manila with the next bull cart train," he suggested eagerly. "Reddy Fagin tells me there will be one going in on the 22d. It will stay over night, and we might run that Chino down and force him to tell us the truth."

"That will be Wednesday night," said Russell, "the night on which Douglas Atwell is to meet Col. Quicoy Siongco on the Lico Road, and betray the rifles into his possession. You have too many engagements."

"Then we might get Klondyke to come out with us, and hold a reception for that Chino and his friends before—before he gets there." Douglas could not say the name that naturally rose to his lips. "Better still," he went on enthusiastically, "we might capture the conspirator red-handed, and settle the matter with him right there."

Russell shook his head. "In my judgment," said he, "the letter is a mere blind. No man in the company would betray arms

into the hands of the enemy to be used against us; but if an Insurgent were to be captured with such a letter on his person, it would certainly prove a serious matter for the alleged writer. The man who wrote the letter would have no hesitation in sacrificing an Insurgent in order to gratify his love for you."

"Then you think there is no chance of success on the Lico Road, and that we better look for the Chino in Manila?"

"Exactly. That slick Chino is not risking his precious skin by a midnight affair on the road. If the engagement is genuine, he would have some paid thug there to do his dirty work. Moreover, I don't believe the writer had any intention of keeping the engagement, and we would not be able to confirm our suspicion; we would reveal our knowledge, and not discover anything incriminating. By the way, did you notice the manner in which the word, 'rear,' is spelled in the note?"

"Yes, I was about to call your attention to it."

"Well, you'd better go back to your tent as if nothing had happened, and take a good sleep. Leave the letter with me and I will

think it over at my leisure, but from present indications I think that you need have no fear for the outcome."

"Thank you, Russell," said Douglas, as he shook the young collegian's hand. "I am heartily grateful to you."

Relieved from the suspense and anxiety which had destroyed his peace of mind, Douglas now slept not only throughout the hot, sweltering afternoon, but also through the night, and awoke on the morning of February 16th refreshed, and eager to meet any dangers and difficulties the future might hold in store for him.

The sunlight came slantingly through the tropical foliage, and he filled his chest with the sweet morning air which drifted lazily through the palm groves. Within ten paces of him lay Jackson, sleeping as softly as a child, his handsome face surmounted with a mass of wavy brown hair which the breeze gently stirred. A more finely chiseled face Douglas thought he had never seen, and as he gazed he felt a pang that he had ever mentally accused this handsome boy, and earnestly hoped that his suspicions might never be confirmed.

A newsboy was approaching from the direction of Manila, and Douglas met him at the edge of the encampment and purchased a morning paper. A glaring headline ran across the front of the page:

"*An Attempt to Burn the City, and to Assassinate the European Population, Crushed by the Provost Guard.*

"*Insurgent Letter, Commanding the Slaughter of All White Men, Women, and Children, Captured by the Vigilant American Soldiers in the Nick of Time.*

"*Colonel Quicoy Siongco, a Chinese Mestizo, Leader of the Incendiaries, Barely Escaped Over the Back Fence of His Shack.*

"*Translation of a Tagalog Document Found on the Body of an Insurgent Killed by the Outpost of Company M, ——th Infantry, on the Night of February 14th, Revealed the Details of the Fiendish Conspiracy, and Led to the Effort to Capture this Dangerous Chinese Conspirator.*"

Douglas Atwell stood transfixed. This, then, was the document which he had passed over so carelessly, which, but for Fred Russell, might never have been forwarded to the proper authorities.

The story read like a fairy tale. "From the date on which the outbreak occurred," the narrative ran, "the restless population of Manila has given the government the gravest concern. Every night flames can be seen shooting up from the miserable shacks on the outskirts of the city where the ununiformed marauders lurk in ambush, and plot atrocities. Nearly every morning, the dead bodies of assassinated natives are found in the plundered shacks, or floating down the Pasig to the Bay.

"It is the time of the 'venganza' (vengeance) when every ruffian settles his private grievances by the assassination of his adversary.

"Moreover, in order to provide for the food supply of this immense population, trade on the Pasig has been resumed, thus affording an avenue to Manila for the food products of the Laguna de Bay district. Passes and identification cards are necessary to pass the guards on the river and the thoroughfares, but when thousands come and go, no one can say that the man who goes beyond the lines is he who returns to the city of Manila. Certain that their Katipunan brethren will not betray them, Insurgent spies freely cross the Amer-

ican lines under the protection of the cards and passes which a lenient government had furnished their confederates in Manila.

"Protected in this manner an Insurgent, bearing an order to burn the city and to assassinate the European population, attempted to steal through the lines near Caloocan, on the night of February 14th."

Here followed an account of the outpost encounter, in which Douglas Atwell saw himself depicted as a hero without peer.

"The translation of the document taken from the dead body of the Insurgent," continued the article, "revealed its barbarous character, but this is not the only source from which the government secured the same information.

"Every night for the last week, bancos have been gliding through the Vitas Swamp, each banco bearing its half-naked, silent group of bolomen, or riflemen, charged with the destruction of the city and its white inhabitants. A member of the Secret Service Corps discovered an Insurgent officer landing from one of these bancos, traced him to the city, and caused his arrest by the Provost Guard. Upon

the Insurgent was found a document in Tagalog addressed to Señor Quicoy Siongco, Chinese Merchant. This paper, and the one captured at Caloocan by the plucky sentry, reached headquarters at about the same time, and the translations were found to read as follows :

* * * * *

" ' First. You will so dispose that at eight o'clock at night the individuals of the territorial militia at your order will be found united in all the streets of San Pedro armed with their bolos and revolvers and guns and ammunition, if convenient.

" ' Second. Philippine families only will be respected. They should not be molested, but all other individuals, of whatever race they may be, will be exterminated without any compassion after the extermination of the army of occupation.

" ' Third. The defenders of the Philippines in your command will attack the guard at Bilibid and liberate the prisoners and " presidiarios," and having accomplished this, they will be armed, saying to them, " Brothers, we must avenge ourselves on the Americans and exterminate them, that we may take our revenge for the infamies and treacheries they have committed upon us. Have no compassion upon them ; attack with vigor. All

Filipinos 'en masse' will second you. Long live Filipino Independence!" '

"Subsequent events developed the fact," continued the narrative, "that a third paper had reached its destination, but the well prepared Provost Guard instantly crushed the uprising at all points, and the upheaval must be looked for at a later date."

With bated breath Douglas Atwell followed the story of the pursuit of Col. Quicoy Siongco which was here related, but the article placed the scene of action in Calle De Lacoste, in the district of Santa Cruz, whereas the address of Quicoy Siongco on the captured letter was No. —— Escolta.

The narrative closed with the remark :— "Although this dangerous Chinese renegade made good his escape, he was forced to abandon an unfinished letter, the full character of which the press is not at liberty to divulge, but which seemed to indicate that there is a traitor lurking in the American ranks."

Douglas flushed crimson as he read these lines. Perhaps he had confided in Fred Rus-

sell not a moment too soon. With nervous fingers, he folded the paper and walked down toward the kitchen to await the coming of the rest of the company.

Babong was there, nimbly assisting his red-headed, freckled-faced chief in the preparation of the morning meal.

"Read that, Reddy," said Douglas, as he tossed the paper to him, and led Babong away from the kitchen.

"Bab," said he in a low tone, "sabe Colonel Quicoy Siongco?"

Babong started, glanced cautiously about, and whispered through his teeth, "Este Chino," and indicated in his wonderful pantomime the Chinese fruit vender who had signaled him a death sentence over the shoulder of the "Queer Fellow" on the day they had the bout with bayonets. Douglas placed his fingers upon his lips, and Babong instantly lapsed into his normal manner, and resumed his work.

Private Leland Jackson with a copy of the morning paper in his hand, had sauntered into the kitchen. There was nothing in his manner to betray the slightest anxiety, regret,

or nervousness, as he jestingly discussed the tragic events that had occurred within the city.

Again Douglas gazed and wondered. Could this thing be possible?

He must wait, control his anxiety, and refrain from accusation until an opportunity came of driving this Chinese guerrilla to bay, and forcing him at the point of his rifle to disclose the truth.

CHAPTER XI

THE WORK OF QUICOY SIONGCO

As Quicoy Siongco was the only person who could possibly identify the writer of the forged letter, Douglas Atwell resolved to make a great effort to accomplish his capture, and then force him to reveal his knowledge.

There was reason to believe that Douglas had in his possession sufficient facts to warrant the attempt. He had the address on the envelope of the captured letter, while the newspapers of 16th February recounted Quicoy's escape from one of his hiding-places in the Santa Cruz district. Moreover, the cedula of Ramon Pacheco, the messenger who was killed at the outpost, provided a possible means for securing a person familiar with the haunts of the guerrilla chieftain.

Some delay was necessary, however, before attempting the project, as no opportunity of going to Manila would be provided before the 22d of the month. As stated by Reddy

Fagin, a bull cart train would go into the city on that date to dispose of excess baggage which could not be carried in the coming arduous campaign for which preparations had already begun. The train was to wait over night at the regimental storehouse, and return next day with fresh meat, bread, a new supply of cooking utensils, and sufficient fuel to last till the end of the month.

A detachment from the company would escort the train, and there would be no difficulty in getting an assignment to this duty, as the work was regarded as arduous and disgreeable.

Fred Russell heartily seconded the plan, and suggested that Klondyke Jones and the "Queer Fellow" be asked to join the expedition, giving to them such explanation of the circumstances as might be desirable. The "ole sojer" and his pal asked no questions, and gladly embraced the opportunity of attempting the capture of an Insurgent Colonel whose possible hiding-place, Douglas informed them, he had had the good fortune to discover.

Having once decided upon his course,

Douglas set to work with unremitting energy. Lieutenant Milton readily granted permission for him and his friends to go to Manila as part of the regular escort, and asked no explanation as to why this disagreeable duty was sought.

Everything seemed favorable to the success of the plan, but nevertheless, Douglas chafed in spirit as he thought of the five weary days he would have to wait. The delay had its advantage, however, because it afforded him time to overcome his emotions, and to coolly think over his plan of action.

He tried to consider every possible phase of the situation, to anticipate every possible development which might result from the encounter with Quicoy Siongco which he so ardently desired.

Never had Douglas felt the heat so much as during these five days while he languished in his tent, and merely waited for time to pass. Work on the trenches had been completed, and the companies were obliged to lie still in camp while the outposts constantly skirmished with the enemy. At night the shots rattled through the shacks along the line,

making sleep a luxury and normal rest almost an impossibility.

At last the time expired, and the morning of the 22d arrived.

The escort was to make an early start, and the eager boy awoke with the first break of dawn, but he was not the first astir that morning.

Babong, squatted upon his heels, patiently waited for the young American to awake. One glance at the native's face indicated that something was amiss, and Douglas rose and went to him at once.

Babong withdrew to a point among the bamboo secure from observation, and then took from his belt the precious anting-anting, and unfolded the wrappings with trembling hands. There lay the quartz rock, but the thread of scarlet tinge was changed to a dullish brown—the sign wrought by a supreme power, he believed, to warn him of imminent danger.

As he beheld the look of surprise that came over the young soldier's face, Babong shrank and quivered like a dog in the presence of impending death, for he read in the Ameri-

can's manner a confirmation of his own terrible fears. Douglas Atwell was no believer in the power of charms, but he could readily understand the unlettered Igorrote's superstition in the presence of a phenomenon of nature which he himself could not comprehend, and his mind sought some means of helping Babong in his trouble; but when Babong learned that Douglas was to go that day to Manila, he flung himself upon his knees and begged to accompany the train, for he said that his anting-anting had revealed to him that safety was to be found only in the company of the young American.

Anxious to relieve the poor Igorrote's mind, Douglas secured the permission of Lieutenant Milton to take the native with him to Manila; and thus it happened that when the escort to the bull cart train drew out from Caloocan on the morning of February 22d, Babong, the Igorrote, was mounted as a bull driver on the back of one of the carabaos.

Douglas Atwell, Fred Russell and Klondyke Jones walked by his side, assuring the Igorrote of their fidelity and protection. The "ole sojer" had been informed of all that had

happened, and had pledged himself to secrecy unless he should be called upon officially to reveal his knowledge.

As the three soldiers trudged along together, Douglas related the cause of Babong's presence, and called attention to the huge bolo, swinging at his side, which Babong had borrowed from Reddy Fagin.

"Nothing better could have happened," said Fred Russell. "If there is any man in camp who is certain to know the face of Quicoy Siongco, Babong is the man, and our success may depend on him. Our natural enemy is his natural enemy. Hence a new power appears on the political horizon, the quadruple alliance of Douglas, Klondyke, me and Bab. How 'bout it, 'ole sojer'?"

"Th' ain't nothin' no more clear than thet 'ere," said Klondyke Jones, "but I think I better tell th' 'Queer Feller' what kind o' a critter we're huntin' t'-night."

"Don't tell him anything about the letter, Klondyke," cautioned Douglas.

"This ain't my first 'listment, Field Marshal," returned Klondyke as he cast a humorous glance at his comrades, and trudged off

toward the head of the column, where Bill Smathers was astride a carabao, learning the worshipful art of "bull drivin'."

"Thet 'ere's one o' th' best ole files in th' army," said Russell, laughingly mimicking Klondyke's tone, as the latter jogged on ahead, leaving the two young men alone to arrange plans for the night.

The train pulled up at the regimental storehouse, and by previous arrangement, Fred Russell, Douglas Atwell, Klondyke Jones and Bill Smathers were to stay on duty during the day, and were to be given the privileges of the town during the night.

It had been agreed that Russell should carry a revolver, while the rest would go armed with rifles, and that Babong would carry his big barong (bolo) and accompany the expedition.

"My idea," said Russell, "would be to go down the Escolta, and look over the house supposed to be the stopping place of Quicoy Siongco. I haven't much hope of making a discovery, and we can't make a search unless we set eyes upon the Chino himself, but we can inspect and become familiar with the

place for future operations should this trip prove a failure."

All agreed, and the quartette with Babong close behind, set out for the Escolta about seven o'clock in the evening.

The suspected building lay in the heart of the business section of the city, and proved to be an ordinary business house, bearing the name of a respected Chinese firm which did business on a large scale; but now the place was closed; iron bars covered the windows, and the house was shrouded in darkness.

"The place is run by a gang of Chinos," said the soldier who was doing duty as a policeman in the Escolta, "but as they were supposed to be beyond reproach, I never watched them closely. I've noticed a new face occasionally among them, but I could not be certain about the identity of any. I'm ready to help you out, though, if you are on the track of a suspect."

It was therefore arranged to write the policeman from time to time if it were necessary, but all the particulars in the case were carefully withheld, and the strange party turned their footsteps toward Santa Cruz, the

scene of the pursuit of Col. Quicoy Siongco on the night of February 15th.

It was nearly 8:00 P. M. when the party arrived in Calle de Bilibid and stopped a soldier-policeman of the Thirteenth Minnesota.

"Tell me," said Russell, "how to get to Calle dela Misericordia."

"Three blocks ahead," said the policeman.

"Then where is Calle De Lacoste?"

"Turn to the left when you reach Misericordia, and walk down two blocks. De Lacoste crosses Misericordia."

"Thank you," responded Russell, and the group hurried on, for the residence of Col. Quicoy Siongco and that of Ramon Pacheco, who had been killed at the outposts, were separated by only two blocks.

In a few moments they stood in front of the shack which, according to the captured cedula, was the home of Ramon Pacheco. The street was dark and absolutely still, and the house seemed abandoned.

Babong crept up close to his companions, his eyes glittering with a strange wild light,

half fear, half defiance, and catching Douglas by the arm, he pointed to the corner they had just turned. It was barely possible to discern the figure of a barefooted native, stripped to the waist, who was creeping along the bamboo fence one hundred yards behind them. To an ordinary observer, he was searching for something along the base of the wall, but to Babong, the Igorrote, he was like a vision of the gallows to a condemned man. He drew his long barong, and crouched over the sharp blade, but Douglas restrained him.

"I'll git 'im in a second," whispered the "Queer Fellow," but Klondyke gripped him by the collar.

"Don't stir, Bill, don't stir," said Douglas. "We don't want that lout. That fellow has been following us ever since we entered the district of Santa Cruz. Babong has had his eye on him, but we are between him and the house we want, and let us get there before he can get away to give the alarm."

The group hurried on to De Lacoste, and with eager expectancy, crept down the silent street, while far to the rear the dark figure of the native glided swiftly along in the deep

shadows ; but none of his movements were lost to the watchful eye of Babong.

In a moment the alleged residence of Quicoy Siongco lay in front of them, and the heart of the eager boy sank within him. The street seemed deserted. There was no sign of life about the miserable shack, and it was clear at a glance that the leader of the guerrillas of Santa Cruz used this only as a sub-station for the prosecution of his nefarious trade.

As the four soldiers discussed the situation, a clock in a church tower struck eight. A light glimmered for a moment in the shack in front and the anxious watchers held their breath ; then the entire interior of the shack burst into flames that surged through the windows and rose above the roof.

Rushing across the street the four soldiers crushed down the gate, and entered the enclosure. No one was about, but through the slats in the floor some highly inflammable material fell burning to the ground, and the odor of kerosene oil rose from the heap of saturated rags that blazed within the shack.

" Smash 'er down," shouted Bill Smathers,

as he seized one of the uprights which supported one of the corners of the fragile structure. "We kin stop it right here if there ain't no more shacks sot on fire by thet 'ere Chinese varmint we bin readin' 'bout. Lay hold, boys."

The four sturdy soldiers seized the upright, wrenched it loose, crushed the diagonally opposite support, and the burning shack fell in a heap.

"Thet 'ere's done fur, but 'tain't much use. Listen."

Shots were ringing out along the street near the canal two blocks distant, and a policeman of the Minnesota regiment was running down the street shouting "fire."

The four soldiers ran out to meet him.

"Give it to 'em, boys, while I turn in the alarm," he shouted as he passed. "It will be a terrible night. We've got word that Quicoy Siongco is leading another uprising to burn the city and assassinate the white people."

A large house in the middle of the block was a sheet of flames, which swept across the narrow street, enveloping a second building as Atwell and his comrades hurried up to the

scene; but this conflagration had already passed beyond the power of single handed men, and required the efforts of the whole fire department, which had already been ordered out.

The locality was well selected for the purposes of the incendiaries. It was a district peopled by Chinamen, who had stored in their fragile structures immense quantities of cocoanut shells intended for fuel, and the light fiber of these shells not only ignites very readily, but carries sparks in clouds. Moreover, every building in the contemplated path of the fire had been saturated with kerosene oil by order of Col. Quicoy Siongco; and prompt though they were, the members of the City Fire Department, the English Volunteer Brigade, and the troops of the Minnesotas found themselves confronted with an herculean task as they dashed down the narrow street to the scene of the blazing buildings.

Without hesitation our four soldier friends, and Babong, the Igorrote, jumped to the assistance of their comrades, but work as they would the flames gained upon them. The entire street from the canal was hopelessly

involved, and the firemen were forced to back away toward the centre of the city, and fight the flames step by step as they ate their way inward.

One of the engines abandoned its position, made a detour through Misericordia, stretched its hose around the corner, and renewed its fight against the flames. Here was hope of success, and Douglas and his comrades threw themselves into the new project with renewed energy. The sparks from the blazing cocoanuts fell upon their bare hands, arms and necks, their faces were scorched by the flames, and their exhausted bodies dripped with perspiration; but at every point, Babong, the Igorrote, worked with a frantic zeal which none could excel.

The fire was succumbing before these heroic efforts, and the spirits of the jaded men rose. Shouts of encouragement ran along the street where murmurs of despair were heard only half an hour before, and the firemen redoubled their exertions.

The hose ran along in front of a side alley known as Calle San Fernando and was practically unprotected throughout its whole

length. Douglas Atwell was at the nozzle with one of the firemen, when the flow of water suddenly ceased. Dropping the nozzle, Douglas ran back along the hose to locate the cause, when he saw Babong madly pursuing a fleeing native down the street, while another dark form crept out from a building near Misericordia, and with one quick blow of his bolo severed the hose, already cut once, and disappeared as quickly as he came.

Shouting to Russell and Klondyke, Douglas ran toward the spot as a volley rang out from the adjoining house-tops. The moment was excellently chosen ; the fire concentrated upon the section of lacerated hose was well calculated to discourage further effort of the exhausted men, and force them to abandon the city to the fate of the flames.

But the new attack served only to intensify the zeal of the firemen, while the troops raked the surrounding buildings with their rapid fire. Locating one of the guerrillas by the flash of his rifle, Douglas leveled his rifle and fired. Klondyke and Russell were beside him in an instant, at the point at which the hose had first been cut.

"Look! Look!" whispered Russell, and as Douglas followed his eyes, he saw in the window of the balcony which overlooks Calle San Fernando, the figure of Quicoy Siongco shouting fiercely down to his henchmen in the alley below.

With one leap, Douglas Atwell gained the hall of this building, and groped his way until he stumbled on the stairs. Klondyke Jones and Fred Russell were close behind him, but try as they would, they stumbled and thumped with their heavy shoes.

With beating heart, Douglas at last gained the door and stepped into the room, but with bitter disappointment he saw that Quicoy was gone, while from below he heard the wild battle-cry of Babong as he engaged the assassins whom the Chinese renegade had set upon him. "Watch for the Chino here, Klondyke, while I go to Babong," shouted Douglas, as the Igorrote's frantic scream rang through the room.

Douglas and Russell fairly leaped back down the stairs, for again the terrible yell rose from the hard-pressed native. Rushing into the alley, Douglas with fixed bayonet, and

Russell with revolver flung themselves upon the group of assassins who held Babong imprisoned before their keen blades at the end of the alley. It required the work of only one terrible moment to rescue the poor Igorrote, who then flung himself upon the necks of his rescuers and covered them with the blood that dripped from his lacerated arms and legs.

A moment's inspection explained the situation. Babong's vigilant eyes had detected the native as he crept from the alley and cut the hose, and all the savage instincts of the head-hunter rose within him in a tumult, as he pursued the fleeing native, overtook him in the alley, and severed his head from his body with one terrific blow of the barong.

The pursuit had carried Babong to the end of the alley, and when he attempted to return, he found the way blocked by the bolomen whom Quicoy Siongco had held in leash for hours, awaiting this coveted opportunity. Backing into the angle at the end of the alley, Babong had faced the enemies who had sworn to kill the "Igorrote traitor," and he had slain them one by one with his wonderful blows,

and his tiger-like leaps; but each one had caused him a wound, and realizing the hopelessness of the fight, he had sent forth the cry for help which he had used when face to face with the python whose parched skin now nestled within his belt; and again the cry which he had uttered when face to face with Bontoc, the head-hunter, whose blood had flowed upon the magic quartz rock which now lay within the parched skin.

And deliverance from death had come through Douglas Atwell and Fred Russell.

Henceforth, they would stand to him in the same supernatural relation as his wonderful anting-anting.

Supporting the wounded native, the two young soldiers returned to the main street. The fire had at last succumbed before the energy of the workers, but nearly two blocks had been destroyed.

An officer galloped into the street, and ordered all spare fire engines into the district of Tondo, where the market building had just been fired. The red glare of the flames was already visible above the house-tops.

Babong had fainted from loss of blood, and

the desire to go to the support of comrades in Tondo must be rejected in the presence of the duty of caring for the faithful Igorrote. Improvising a litter, our four soldier friends laid him upon it, and started off for the hospital.

The long contemplated uprising had come at last, but Douglas and his comrades had been spectators of but part of the tragic affair.

It was a night of unspeakable savagery. Murder, arson, and all the barbarous crimes known to the Asiatic race were committed without hesitancy by the disguised marauders who had crawled into Tondo through Vitas Swamp. All night long the soldiers fought these guerrillas as they retreated from house to house, and the troops finally succeeded in arresting the progress of the flames they had started only by blowing up the buildings in the path of the fire with immense charges of gunpowder.

Douglas Atwell and his tired comrades were well on their way to Caloocan the following morning when the struggle in Tondo was terminated by a furious charge of the troops upon the guerrillas, flinging them back into the swamps from which they came.

Russell and Douglas trudged along together in silence. Though Quicoy Siongco had been almost in their hands, yet he had escaped, and the mystery surrounding the captured letter was just as deep as ever; but though the Chino had escaped, Douglas had made a friend whose native cunning and powerful arm he would one day need and command in a moment of extreme peril.

Douglas struggled to talk cheerfully, but so bitter was his disappointment, so complete his preoccupation that he finally gave up the effort, and fell to musing on his plans for the future.

At length it occurred to him that Bill Smathers had not been on the scene at the critical moment the night before when his presence might have turned failure into success.

"Where were you, Bill," Douglas asked, "when the guerrillas opened fire upon us?"

"I jined the fray." he said shortly.

"I didn't see you," urged Douglas.

"Mebbe ye didn't, but I seen you. I seen ye pitchin' fur one o' them houses, an' I thought you'd flushed a covey o' them guerrillas. I dropped 'round 'tween th' burnin'

buildin' an' th' back o' th' house where ye wuz, an' I thought mebbe I'd bag a few when they cum out."

Douglas, now keenly on the alert, awaited for the "Queer Fellow" to finish his story.

"Well, did you get any of them?" he finally asked.

"Naw," said the "Queer Fellow" with an accent of disgust, "only a scared Chinaman cum pikin' out. I wuz so mad thet I hauled off an' hit 'im sich a wallop in th' jaw thet I bet he's sleepin' yet. Then I got afraid thet th' burnin' buildin' would fall onto him, so I drug him 'round into th' alley an' left him there. 'Bout thet time, I seen you an' Russell comin' down the alley with Bab all covered with blood, an' I seen there'd been a rumpus. Guess ye walked over th' Chino, an' tuk 'im fur one o' th' critters Bab had carved up. Why, ye wasn't lookin' fur thet 'ere Chino, wuz ye?"

Douglas nearly choked.

"I didn't see your man, Bill, so I can't say," said Douglas evasively; but he could have cried with chagrin. This then was the penalty he had paid for not confiding the

whole affair to Bill Smathers, the "Queer Fellow."

The panting bulls with tongues lolling from their parched throats had drawn up in front of the company kitchen, and eager to escape the observation of his friends, Douglas walked inside.

"Hello, Reddy," said he abstractedly, "what has happened since we left?"

"Lots," shouted Reddy, as he looked at Douglas through the steam that rose from a boiler of bean soup, "lots. Ye 'member th' night—Feb'ry 14th, I guess it wuz—thet Jackson wuz chased fur his life on outpost by a gang o' bolomen, an' ye run amuck agin a Moro—a feller all dressed in coat o' mail an' so on?"

"Yes."

"An' ye druv him t' th' edge o' th' river with yer bay'nit, an' made him hop inter th' stream?"

"I remember," said Douglas.

"Well last night thet tarnation Moro, he pitched into th' outpost single-handed, an' he took an' nearly chopped the head offen Johnny Gillespie. An' thet ain't all. This mornin'

when th' boys rolls out t' reveille they found two o' th' rifles had been stole from under th' men that slept on top o' 'em."

"Whose rifles?" demanded Atwell.

"Jackson's and Corporal Casey's."

CHAPTER XII

AN ACCUSATION THAT FAILED

Upon the receipt of Reddy Fagin's information that two rifles had been stolen, and that Private Gillespie had had "th' head nearly chopped offen 'im" by the Moro, Douglas Atwell sank wearily upon a hardtack box, mopped his dripping forehead, and struggled hard to hold back the choking sensation that rose in his throat. How completely had he failed in every direction! How utterly discouraged he felt!

Once more the Moro loomed like a danger-signal on the horizon; the Moro whom Douglas, Klondyke and others had seen among the Insurgents the day Douglas made his sketch of the Insurgent trenches from the top of the great tree in front of Caloocan; the Moro before whom Jackson had deserted his outpost, shrieking frantically for help, on the night of February 14th; who would have killed Jackson had it not been for Douglas, who flung

himself in the path of the terrible boloman, and forced him to leap over the river bank before his skilful bayonet.

This was a feat of which any soldier might feel proud, but in his depressed mental condition, Douglas could see no merit in his failure to capture the Moro, who, in order to show his contempt for his adversary had now attacked an outpost single-handed, and had wounded Private Gillespie almost beyond the hope of recovery.

But this was not the only reason why Douglas felt uneasy.

When Quicoy Siongco, the only person who could reveal the identity of the man who had forged his name, was almost in his hands, Douglas' stumbling, clumsy feet had warned the Chino of danger, and had permitted him to make good his escape.

Certainly "lots" had happened, to distress him, to emphasize his failure, and to exaggerate his feeling of depression.

Though he had tried to serve his country with all his generous zeal, yet, on mere official disclosures, he would stand convicted of having entered into a traitorous correspondence

with the enemy, and of having caused the betrayal of two rifles into the hands of the Insurgents.

"Never mind, Douglas," said Russell, "I will have to assume the responsibility for the loss of those two rifles. It was my judgment that no effort would be made to betray the rifles, but I was mistaken. The case is more serious than I had thought at first, and it shows us that we must proceed with caution. But don't be discouraged, my boy, for we will finally succeed."

"Anyway, worryin' won't help Johnny Gillespie's head, nor bring back th' rifles; so come on, boys, an' let's git th' carts unloaded," said Klondyke Jones.

The work was done in a silence that was painful, and with minds sorely perplexed the three friends went to their respective tents.

The brain does not act readily in the Philippines, and rest was necessary to recuperate the spent faculties.

The little shelter tents of the company had been stretched over bamboo beds, erected by the men three feet above the ground, and throwing himself wearily on the bare slats,

Douglas vainly struggled to form a new plan of operations.

Every event during the last twenty-four hours had brought its disappointment, but the information concerning the Moro had given him a profound shock, for he felt that his struggle with this terrible fanatic had not yet terminated. It was true that in his encounter with the Moro on the night of February 14th, Douglas had put him to flight, but Douglas fully realized that a single false step, a foot entangled in the creeping vines, would have earned for him the fate that had befallen the unfortunate Gillespie.

No doubt the Moro had already verified Atwell's identity, through one of the many Insurgent spies. The rough treatment which he had received at the hands of the young soldier had no doubt inspired his rage, and his hatred for the Americans would now be concentrated upon the man who had humiliated him. Douglas looked into the future with genuine dread, for since the night of February 14th, he had learned much concerning the character of the race to which the Moro belonged.

Many pages of the history of the Philippines are devoted to the story of this warlike people. Originally of Saracenic or Moorish extraction, the Moros brought from their ancient homes in Borneo or southern India the institutions of polygamy and slavery, and all that fierce hatred of Christianity which is the Saracenic inheritance of the ages. Completely overrunning the Island of Mindanao, the second largest of the group, they became the most dreaded pirates of the tropical seas, raiding the surrounding tribes, and carrying off the wives of their victims.

It was the custom of the Moro warrior to go forth clad in coat of mail and helmet, with shield, and kampilan, and with tiger-like ferocity and agility, to fling himself upon his hereditary foe, always preferring a Spanish missionary. Cruel to the very heart, he would take a human life just to try the keenness of his blade. Angered by the adversity of fate, his faith teaches him to spring upon his Christian brethren, and the number that he may slay before he is himself laid low determines the measure of his celestial happiness.

This was the race to which Douglas Atwell's enemy belonged, and Inac, for such was the Moro's name, was distinguished as a savage member of a savage race.

From prisoners captured during a reconnaissance, Douglas had learned that Inac had committed some crime against the customs of his race, and that in order to atone for his offense, he had taken a sacred oath to die wallowing in Christian blood. Inac was, then, one of the dreaded "juramentados" (persons bound by the above oath), who had found his way into the ranks of the Insurgent army on account of the opportunity it gave him of slaying the Christian Americans. While the natives of Luzon are, for the most part, Christians, yet the glory of killing them faded in the presence of the greater glory to which Inac now aspired.

When prepared for conflict, the Moro wore his armor, consisting of strips of carabao horn laced together by a strong coat of chain mail. His kampilan was stained with the blood of many victims, the latest of whom was Private Gillespie, of Company M, ——th Infantry, and his shield bore the marks of Douglas Atwell's

bayonet, recording one of the few instances in which the Moro had met his match.

These marks were a challenge to combat which Douglas felt sure the Moro would not only accept but would force upon him, and he fully realized that this was no ordinary contest of man against man, of skill against skill, wherein the most dexterous might survive, for the "juramentado's" contract is fulfilled by dying—by killing while being killed.

Douglas mentally reviewed the details of his encounter with the Moro, and it became clear that Inac could have killed him if he had been willing to forfeit his life in the act. Apparently the Moro had chosen to save himself because the number of his slain had not yet been considered sufficient to expiate the crimes he had committed against his race. From the history of his kind, it could be predicted that when the number of his actual or possible victims seemed sufficient to merit eternal glory, Inac, the "juramentado," would leap into the midst of the largest available group of Christians, and would gladly accept death for the glory of killing them.

While these thoughts were passing in the mind of Douglas Atwell, Lieutenant Milton was holding, in his tent, an investigation into the loss of the rifles. The sentinels had seen and had heard nothing. Corporal Casey declared that he had gone to sleep with his rifle beneath his blanket; that he had slept soundly throughout the night, and that he had not discovered his loss until he turned out to answer reveille roll-call in the morning.

Not a sign, track, or mark had been left to indicate the identity of the thief, and the whole matter seemed shrouded in a mystery which defied solution. Douglas Atwell felt that only additional confusion would result from turning over the captured letter to Lieutenant Milton, and this course presented no compensating advantage except that of escaping personal responsibility for the whole miserable affair, and of throwing the burden of investigation upon the shoulders of his superior officer. This would not only be shirking a disagreeable task, but would be sounding a warning note to his enemy.

In view of these considerations, Douglas

once more resolved to maintain a discreet and watchful silence. Meanwhile Lieutenant Milton was questioning Jackson also.

Jackson was absolutely ignorant, he declared, of any actual knowledge as to how his rifle had been taken, but his manner was nervous and hesitating, his language guarded and veiled, and his attitude involved a sneering insinuation of the apparent guilt of some one.

"Jackson," said Lieutenant Milton, as he fixed his searching eyes upon the soldier, "your manner convinces me that you are withholding something. Am I to infer that you have any suspicion as to how the rifles were lost?"

It was the opportunity for which Jackson had waited.

"If I am forced to state my suspicions, sir, I must say that I think a member of the company had something to do with the loss of the rifles," said Jackson.

"Who?" demanded Lieutenant Milton.

"Private Atwell, sir."

Not a change came over the young officer's face, but his eyes were fixed with such pene-

trating scrutiny upon the collegian that the latter felt his muscles quiver, and his heart stand still. Never had he played so hard a part; never one more daring. It seemed an age before Lieutenant Milton spoke in the same clear, calm and commanding tone.

"Why did you suspect Atwell?"

Jackson rallied. If he could but speak he was never at a loss, and he had the art of "making a case," the fallacies of which were not apparent at first inspection.

"Well, sir," said Jackson, "I have noticed Atwell hanging around that Igorrote ever since he was captured, and their friendliness never seemed natural to me. Babong is a native, and if we have learned anything in this campaign it is that all natives are against us; all are treacherous to the heart, and I have no reason to believe that this savage is any better than the rest. Yesterday morning before reveille I happened to see Babong showing Atwell something down behind the kitchen. It was all done in the most secret and stealthy manner, and afterward Atwell asked permission, I understand, to take the Igorrote to Manila with him. Now, there is

only one man who could lead a party to the outskirts of the camp at night, sneak in, and carry off the rifles, and that man is Babong. He was supposed to be in Manila last night with Atwell. I have a strong suspicion that he was here in camp, but I have no positive proof, and so I hesitated, sir."

"And how do you make Atwell responsible for the theft?"

"I think Babong concluded to turn spy at the time he asked to be put to work in the company. It was easier to be a spy than to be a prisoner, and he was thus put in direct communication with the Insurgents, to whom he naturally belongs. Through Babong, I think Atwell was bought over to the service of the enemy."

"You think that Babong led the party to the camp at Atwell's instigation, and that Babong actually did the stealing?" suggested Lieutenant Milton.

"That is my suspicion," responded Jackson.

"When did this idea occur to you?"

"Immediately after I discovered the loss of my rifle—at reveille this morning."

"And you have been careful to find out all

the facts, to sift the evidence, to confirm or to destroy your suspicion?"

"Yes, sir," said Jackson confidently.

"And your suspicion as to Atwell's guilt is so strong as to warrant an official declaration?"

"I don't want to get any one into trouble, sir, but I couldn't conceal my suspicion."

"At what time did you go to sleep last night?"

"About eleven o'clock, sir."

"Was your rifle in your possession at that time?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then, if your suspicion be correct, Babong must have visited this camp between eleven o'clock last night and reveille this morning?"

"Yes, sir," said Jackson with a slight flush.

"Where have you been since the escort returned from Manila?"

"About the company, sir."

"Have you not heard of the attempt to burn the city last night?"

"Yes, sir, I heard some talk in a general way," said Jackson uneasily.

"Then is it not well known to you, and to every man in the company, that Atwell and

his comrades were fighting the fire and the Insurgents in the streets of Manila until eleven o'clock last night; that Babong was seriously wounded while fighting natives who had attempted to cut the fire hose, and that he was then taken to the hospital, where he has since remained?"

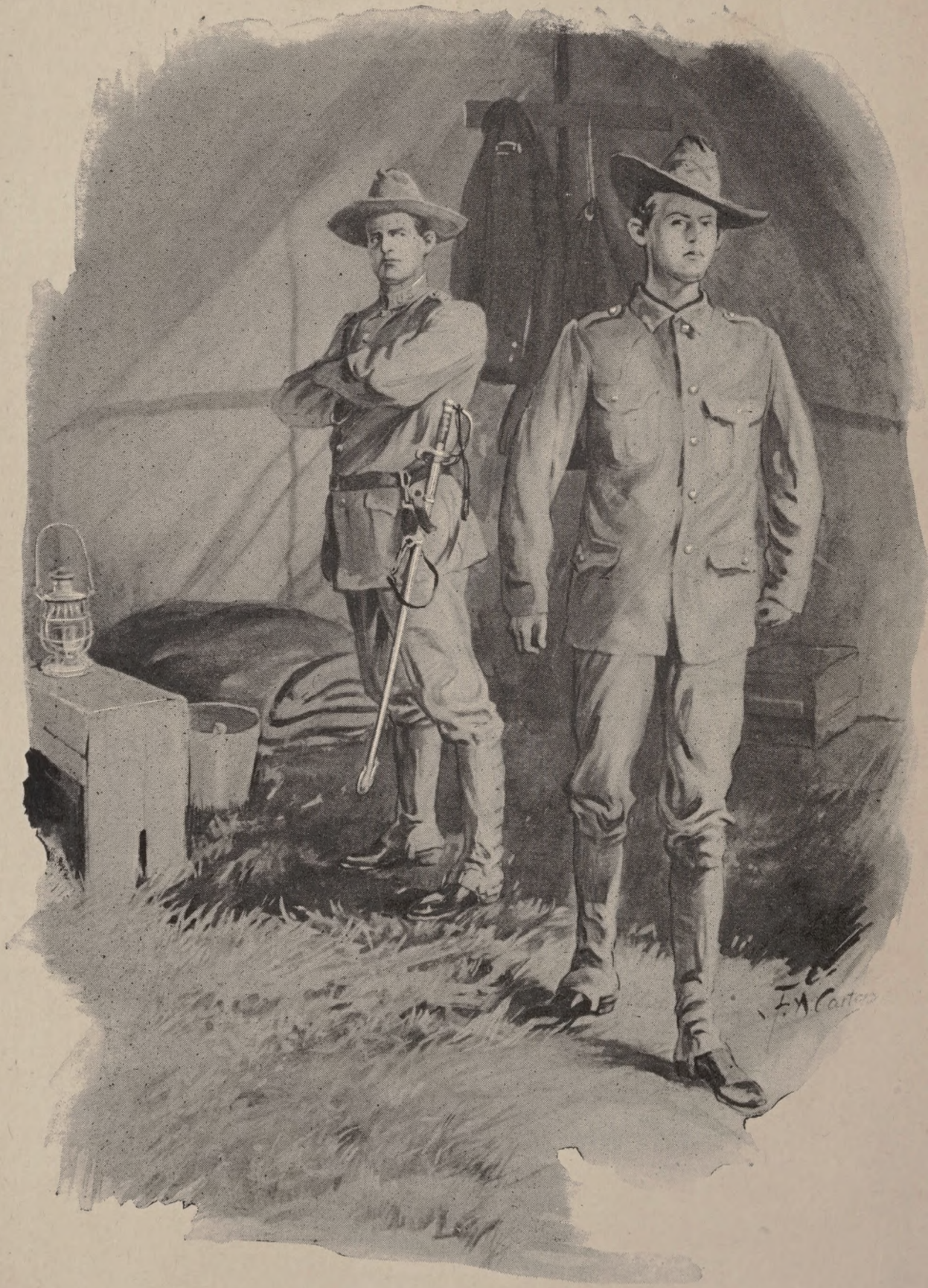
"N–no, sir, I had not heard that."

"That being the case, however, which every one but you appears to know, your suspicion concerning Atwell seems to be unfounded."

"I might be wrong, sir," stammered Jackson.

"Your case against Atwell was founded on the assumption that Babong is a spy who had acted as a medium for the purchase of the infidelity of Atwell, and the facts, which you could have verified in ten minutes, show conclusively that Babong nearly lost his life fighting the people by whom you say he was employed as a spy. Not only 'might' you be wrong, but it is impossible that you should be right."

Lieutenant Milton's manner commanded no further reply, as he ran his flashing eyes over the self-convicted calumniator.



"THIS IS NOT THE WORK OF A SELF-RESPECTING MAN. THAT WILL DO, SIR!"

"Jackson," said he, rising and folding his arms, "you have accused a member of the company of a crime which would dishonor his name, and place him in a felon's cell. There is absolutely nothing to support the charge, and I believe that you know it. This is not the work of a self-respecting man. That will do, sir."

Once outside the company commander's tent, Jackson's face went awry with anger. He ground his teeth, and in his heart he vowed that he would fight it out to the very last against Douglas Atwell.

This was Jackson's first public manifestation of enmity, and in justice to him, it must be said that his original desire to punish Douglas Atwell for his accidental discovery of his cowardice, had gradually and almost unconsciously grown into a bitter hatred which had finally mastered him. Anxious merely to cast suspicion upon the character of Douglas Atwell, he had hesitated, insinuated, hoping that Lieutenant Milton would accept an implied charge without the brutal examination into particulars which had forced him to a public betrayal of his feelings; and now

either he or Atwell must win. There was no such thing as retreat; and Jackson's active mind began at once to formulate new plans for accomplishing the humiliation of his unwilling enemy.

Unconscious of all that had passed, Douglas Atwell tossed restlessly upon his bamboo couch, and vainly sought a respite from his tormenting thoughts. It had been his misfortune to stumble on Jackson when the young collegian's courage had failed him and he lay hiding behind the bamboo thicket while his company went on to the gallant charge on blockhouse No. 14. Though Douglas had preserved absolute silence concerning the incident, yet knowledge of Jackson's conduct had gradually reached his comrades, and had won their well merited contempt.

Douglas had ignored the incident as far as possible, but the capture on the night of February 14th, of the forged letter bearing Douglas Atwell's signature, and proposing a betrayal of five rifles into the hands of the enemy, had revealed a dangerous enemy whose identity Douglas could hardly doubt. The serious nature of the case was demonstrated by the

actual disappearance of two of the rifles on the date proposed in the letter, and while Douglas Atwell was absent from the company.

It was natural to suppose that Quicoy Siongco had accomplished the capture of the rifles, had it not been for the fact that he was seen by Douglas Atwell that very night in Manila. This left some doubt as to whether the rifles had been stolen at all, as a mere concealment of the weapons would have produced all the necessary appearance of Douglas Atwell's guilt, which was the object of the conspirator.

Had Douglas but succeeded in capturing Quicoy Siongco, all these broken fragments of evidence might have been forged into a complete chain; but the irony of fate had sent the Chino flying from Douglas into the arms of the "Queer Fellow," who had knocked him senseless, and tossed him into the alley, where Douglas had unknowingly walked over the man whose capture meant so much to him.

The captured letter was still in the hands of Fred Russell, but the handwriting had been so perfectly disguised as to defy identifi-

cation except by an expert, and experts were not available in Manila. The misspelled word "reer" appeared to be the only clue which might lead to results.

Thus it happened that there was no positively incriminating evidence against the man whom Douglas Atwell was forced to suspect, and he could only wait with patience and refrain from public accusation.

"Let 'em git 'nouf rope," Klondyke Jones had repeatedly urged. "You don't hev' t' do nothin' 't all. Ye can't keep some people from hangin' themselves, if ye only give 'em 'nouf tether, an' Jackson's one o' 'em."

And from the look in Jackson's face as he came back to his tent after his interview with Lieutenant Milton, it was clear that he would take all the risks of hanging himself in the effort to injure the object of his hatred. Never had Douglas seen a more handsome face more completely deformed with anger, and he wondered what had happened to so completely destroy the young collegian's remarkable nonchalance.

Every one in the company talked, reasoned, conjectured upon the strange things that had

happened, but when this eventful day closed, only two official facts were available for publication :

First. That Private John Gillespie, Company M, ——th Infantry, had died from wounds received at the hands of Inac, the "juramentado."

Second. That two rifles, numbers 97,997 and 67,883, had been stolen from the company during the night of February 22d, and had probably fallen into the hands of the enemy.

CHAPTER XIII

UNDER ARREST

A MONTH had passed since the uprising in Manila, and nothing was definitely known as to the whereabouts of Quicoy Siongco. No further attempt had been made to burn the city, however, and it was believed that the Insurgents had at last recognized the folly of such a course, or had found the personal dangers too great. Why the attempt had ever been made was beyond the comprehension of the American mind. It was said that some wise adviser of Aguinaldo had insisted that as the Russians had defeated the greatest soldier of all Europe by burning the city of Moscow, so the Filipinos might defeat the American commander by reducing the city of Manila to ashes. The fact that Moscow was the only depot of supplies on the frozen plains of Russia, whereas the unlimited supplies of the United States had uninterrupted access to the harbor of Manila, while houses were an un-

necessary luxury to the American troops, did not seem to appeal to the strategist who urged the destruction of the Oriental metropolis.

At last wiser counsels prevailed, and it was currently reported that Quicoy Siongco and his incendiaries had been recalled from the city and had taken their places with the Insurgents in front of Caloocan, where the majority of the Revolutionary forces had been concentrated to meet the contemplated attack of the American army.

Many new regiments had arrived from the United States, and General MacArthur's division now numbered some 12,000 men, with which he proposed to defeat the Insurgent army, nearly 20,000 strong, and press on to the north as far as it was possible to go before the beginning of the rainy season.

In addition to their superiority in numbers, every natural and artificial advantage lay in the hands of the Insurgents. The whole territory to be invaded was occupied by a dense native population excited to intense hostility to the Americans by the false and malicious representations of Tagalog politicians. Every military operation would be discovered and

reported to the Insurgents by this watchful civilian population, while the operations of the enemy would be guarded with a secrecy of which only the Asiatic is capable. Each mile gained in advance would place the hostile inhabitants of that territory in the rear of the advancing army, to prey upon the line of communications and to ambush isolated bodies of American troops.

Moreover, the only railroad of the Islands traverses this hostile territory from Manila in the south to Dagupan in the north, a distance of one hundred and twenty-three miles. All the rolling stock had been seized by the Insurgents immediately after the outbreak of hostilities, thus placing in their hands all the facilities for rapid transportation of their troops either for advance or retreat.

No accurate maps of the country were available, but it was known that the whole territory was laced with deep unfordable rivers, guarded at all important points by intrenchments which the Insurgents had been preparing for many months. It was clear, therefore, that desperate fighting would characterize the advance, but, nevertheless, all were

eager for the orders to march, and the spirits of the men were excellent.

Advantage had been taken of the necessary delay to place the army in the best possible drill and discipline. Contact with the enemy had been maintained by daily reconnoitring parties, one of which had penetrated deeply into the enemy's country, and had brought back a valuable map, executed by Douglas Atwell. The reconnaissance had been extended behind the enemy's lines to the Tuliahan River, and while the party lay concealed in the dense thickets, Douglas sketched the scene.

A native came down to the river, and the party watched him breathlessly, not fifty yards away, as he waded neck deep across the stream. This obscure but practicable ford was carefully marked upon the map, and the party succeeded in retracing its steps to camp without being discovered by the enemy. Douglas Atwell completed a neat sketch in ink, which he submitted to Lieutenant Milton, while he retained the rough field sketch in lead-pencil.

During the past month, Douglas had learned the value of the art upon which he had

formerly looked with laughing indifference; for under the instructions of Lieutenant Milton, he had made, from the old Spanish models, a series of skeleton maps of all the territory from Manila to Dagupan, each map covering about a day's march. Thus, the general features of the proposed theatre of military operations had become as familiar to him as the geography of his native township.

But reconnaissance and map making were not the only occupations of the past month, for Babong had returned from the hospital in Manila, completely recovered from the effects of his wounds, and the interrupted exercises with the bayonet and bolo had been resumed.

It was no longer necessary to urge Babong into giving his time and energy to this exhausting work. On the contrary, he eagerly anticipated every desire of his young soldier friend, and took advantage of every opportunity which would bring them together. The service which Douglas had rendered him on the night of February 22d, when, wounded and bleeding, Babong faced certain death at the hands of the assassins whom Quicoy

Siongco had set upon him, had won the Igorrote's fullest gratitude. The circumstances were such as to enlist in Douglas Atwell's favor all the Igorrote's instinct of natural loyalty and superstitious devotion. As if in complete verification of the anting-anting's power of indicating danger, Babong had become involved in this terrific fight for life, while by Douglas Atwell's sudden appearance and successful intervention at the moment of supreme peril, he seemingly verified Babong's superstitious belief that Douglas was endowed with miraculous power to shield him from harm.

With the keen and certain intuition of his race, Babong had come to recognize the Moro as an enemy who must be finally dealt with.

He had fashioned a wooden kampilan of the exact form used by the Moro, and with this weapon he engaged Douglas in daily bouts, and taught him how to meet and defeat this wonderful fanatic. Having padded the point of his bayonet with the remnants of an old boxing glove, Douglas was able to simulate all the features of a real duel when he and Babong faced each other, and to

assault with as much desperation as if a life were at stake. While he could not equal Babong in agility and accuracy, yet Douglas knew that he was at last the Igorrote's master, and that if it again fell to his lot to fight the terrible Moro, the chance of victory would probably be in his favor.

Indeed the Moro had inspired a wholesome respect for his prowess, for Private Gillespie was not the only soldier who had fallen before his cruel blade. From Malabon to the Pasig he roamed by night, and if an outpost relaxed its vigilance, the cost thereof was expressed the next morning in terms of dead and wounded American soldiers.

Upon clear nights, the Moro preferred to abandon his helmet and coat of mail, to cover his shield with black cloth and lash his kampilan between two flat pieces of bamboo to conceal its flash, and then to creep forward upon his prey.

"He can hide behind a blade of grass," said one of the soldiers, "approach within twenty-five yards unseen in the clear open, and walk with as soundless a tread as a cat; while the crash of the heavy feet of our lightest men is

heard for half a mile. I tell you, boys, I fired at that fellow the other night when he was not twenty yards away, and though I'm a fair shot, I had the buck fever so badly that I missed him clean. I'd rather fight a half dozen skirmishes than to do two hours' outpost duty on a dark night. But our time is coming. We will not be held here very much longer, and when we are cut loose, the Moro will be put on the hike with the rest of his kind."

The soldier was right. That very day General MacArthur had completed his preparations for the general advance of his division, and the morning of March 25th had been set for the opening attack.

Aguinaldo was still at Malolos, the capital of the Revolutionary Government, while Luna, his great military leader, commanded ten thousand Insurgents on the railroad in the immediate front of the American troops. The first great blow would be directed against these, the flower of the Insurgent Army, and if General MacArthur succeeded in crushing them, the ready conquest of the whole Insurgent territory would be assured.

All excess baggage had been sent to the regimental storehouse in Manila, and, stripped for action, the troops bivouacked on the night of March 24th on a line extending roughly from Caloocan to the pumping-station.

A small number of troops had been assigned the duty of guarding the trenches which the division would vacate, but to the ——th Infantry was given the esteemed privilege of participating in the campaign.

Every soldier understood the part his regiment was to play, and could give his intelligent cooperation. The whole line was to pivot on the left flank and swing to the left through an angle of nearly ninety degrees, thus forcing the Insurgents back upon the railroad, when a rapid advance would roll them up in confusion and complete their disorder.

"We'll go through 'em like a wild-cat," said Klondyke Jones, as Corporal Casey's squad sat together discussing the situation. "They've had their fun pesterin' us by night, an' they've got us riled clean through, an' when twelve thousand good an' riled up sojers cuts loose, ye better giv' 'em a clar road."

The "Queer Fellow" maintained his customary silence, but the roll of his head, the shifting glance of his steel gray eyes beneath the brim of his old campaign hat, were signs which indicated the gathering of a terrible storm. He had not forgotten the assassination of Private Schmidt, the young German, on the day following the capture of Pasay when the escort was ambushed on the road to Manila, while the death of young Gillespie at the hands of the Moro was a fresh wound to his sense of fair and square fighting.

Not only Bill Smathers, but all the rest of the company as well, were eager for the fray, and though the company was somewhat depleted in numbers on account of sickness, Corporal Casey commanded the presence of his entire squad.

Private Leland Carlysle Jackson was there, somewhat to the surprise of those who knew him best. Moreover, since the disappearance of the two rifles on the night of February 22d, and his futile attempt to saddle the criminality for the same on the back of Douglas Atwell, all trace of contumely for Douglas and Russell had completely disappeared from his manner.

"I don't understand it, Douglas," Russell was saying. "It is not at all like Leel to abandon a piece of mischief once he has committed himself to the enterprise. I can't help thinking that he has attempted something unusually keen. Or else we were mistaken in the original enemy."

"The whole thing is a tangle which I have been entirely unable to unravel," said Douglas. "I am heartily glad to be off on the campaign where my good friend, whoever he may be, will be forced to think of something better than plotting with the enemy. I want to forget the whole affair. I am willing to believe that Jackson is innocent, and I hope, moreover, that I may never know that he was guilty."

As the two young soldiers were speaking, Private Philip Kelton, a member of the guard, approached and called out Atwell's name.

"Here I am, Kelton," said Douglas lightly; "what do you want?"

"Lieutenant Milton wants you at his tent right away."

There was a strange tone of anxiety in young Kelton's voice which Douglas half

observed, but he hastened to obey the summons without asking questions, and in a moment he stood in the presence of his company commander.

Three members of the guard stood awkwardly in front of the tent, and Kelton rejoined them as Douglas entered.

Without a word Lieutenant Milton handed him a telegram from corps headquarters, and the tent swam dizzily about him as the startled boy read the following lines :—

"If you have a soldier in your company known as Douglas Atwell, place him in arrest at once, and send him under heavy guard to report to the Provost Marshal-General in Manila. He is charged with treason."

All the blood had left young Atwell's face, and he felt as if moving dizzily in space. The candle which sputtered within a tin box reflector on Lieutenant Milton's desk seemed alternately to recede to a mere point, and then to blaze out with such violence that the flames seemed to envelop him, but he felt himself powerless to escape. He thought he felt the hot flames upon his face; he imagined that he held a hose in his hands, and in an instant

he had lived through all the scenes in the streets of Manila when, on the night of February 22d, he fought the flames that Quicoy Siongco had started in the city.

It had been but a moment, but Douglas imagined that hours had passed before the young officer spoke.

"Have you anything to say, Atwell?"

Douglas Atwell's lips parted, and he struggled to speak, but his tongue would not respond. The telegram whose words had temporarily paralyzed his faculties, slipped unconsciously from his fingers.

"Take him to the guard tent," said Lieutenant Milton quietly, without raising his eyes to the pallid face of the boy.

Douglas stumbled along in silence between Philip Kelton and another member of the guard until he reached the guard tent, and then he fell half unconscious upon the floor, a prisoner charged with treason against his country. Gradually he recovered control of his mental faculties, and realized his position. When the regiment would march out the next morning against the enemy, bearing the old flag which it had carried through half a cen-

tury of noble service, he, Douglas Atwell, would be marching under guard to a prison cell to answer a charge of treason.

No sound came to Private Philip Kelton, the sentinel, who walked his post with heavy heart without, but on the floor of the dark tent within, lay Douglas Atwell, and the tears from his honest eyes trickled through the trembling fingers that clasped his forehead. No pang of conscience hurt him, but to be imprisoned by the man whom he loved so much, under a charge so loathsome to his nature, was a wound which pierced his heart.

It was nearly eight o'clock in the evening when these things occurred.

Fred Russell sat upon the edge of his bamboo cot, greasing the breech-block of his rifle with a piece of bacon rind, when Klondyke Jones came over to him and whispered :—

"Atwell's in arrest, an' th' orders is t' take 'im t' prison in th' mornin'. It's more o' thet 'ere varmint's work. Git into action. Th' lad will march agin th' enemy with his regiment instid o' goin' t' prison, or my name ain't Klondyke Jones."

Russell jumped to his feet with a smothered

exclamation, and followed the "ole sojer." When the time came for action, it was not Klondyke's habit to hesitate. There were no careful deliberations in his mind as to possible dangers and entanglements once his strong conviction had assured him that he was "honest and square."

In a moment Klondyke stood over Private Leland Carlysle Jackson as he lay upon his blanket and softly hummed an operatic air.

"Jackson," commanded Klondyke, "git up an' come 'long with me. We've got a little bone t' pick t'gether, an' I don't want t' disturb people with the sound o' th' crunchin'."

Jackson rose languidly upon his elbow.

"When I want your company, Jones," he said sneeringly, "I'll send for you."

Klondyke caught Jackson by the arm and threw all the force of his powerful muscles into an upward heave, and Jackson felt himself flung through the air with a force it would be madness to resist. When Klondyke landed him savagely against a clump of banana-trees, thirty feet from the starting-point, Jackson was too much frightened to offer further resistance.

"Now," said Klondyke, as he laid his steel-like grip upon the shoulders of his prisoner, "we're out o' ear-shot, an' I have this t' tell ye. Atwell's been placed in arrest, an' neither you nor me has t' ask why. But if ye think ye've ruined thet 'ere innocent boy, you're mistaken. I've crossed yer tracks, Jackson, an' we've got th' documents thet show ye up. Jest one more trick like this an' I'll have ye drummed out o' camp, an', besides, I'll follow ye up an' larrup ye till ye beg fur yer life."

Klondyke's terrible grip had been gradually tightening upon Jackson's throat, and he tossed the young collegian about with a violence which suggested the consequences to Jackson if their paths crossed again.

Klondyke released his hold. "Now," said he, "me an' Russell's goin' to Lieutenant Milton t' lay th' evidence we've got before 'im, but ye needn't quake, fur we're not th' kind t' drag a name in th' mud unless we must. But I warn ye if anything happens to Atwell, ye've got me t' fight."

"And the same remarks apply to me, Jackson," added Russell, as he and Klondyke

turned away, leaving the frantic young soldier to whimper out his threats to the unheeding night wind.

There was no time to be lost. As Klondyke and Russell hurried toward Lieutenant Milton's tent, the "ole sojer" glanced uneasily toward his companion.

"Say, Russell," said he, "I ain't much on jaw-bone" (soldier term for fluent talking). "Ye better do th' honors with th' Lieutenant."

"I thought you were doing very well a few moments ago," responded Russell.

"Thet 'ere wuz mule drivin', lad, an' I'm a fair hand at thet job, but when I git up 'fore th' Lieutenant, I feel 's if I'd druv my team inter th' parlor with all th' mules astraddle the poles an' traces."

"All right, Klondyke," whispered Russell as he knocked at the tent pole, "you have busted the broncho. I'll take the credit for it."

We may pass over the long conversation that took place within. Suffice it to say that the whole story of Atwell's relation to Jackson was laid bare to the astonished officer.

Not a word or hint of all this had reached him before.

It was nearly nine o'clock when Fred Russell unfolded the captured letter which Douglas Atwell had found on the body of Ramon Pacheco when the latter attempted to cross the lines with this letter and the orders to burn the city in his possession.

There upon the back was Russell's official affirmation of the circumstances under which it was brought to him when Douglas appealed to him for advice after the discovery of the dangerous nature of the correspondence.

But, more convincing than all this, Lieutenant Milton remembered Jackson's stupid and malicious attempt to convict Douglas Atwell of having sold to the enemy the two rifles which disappeared on the night of February 22d—the very crime contemplated in this forged letter.

"And one of these rifles was Jackson's," thought the Lieutenant as he paced restlessly up and down the tent, "but there is time yet," he reflected, glancing at his watch. "Get your rifles, belts, and canteens, and saddle

three of the horses, and be back here as quickly as you can. We'll settle this question to-night."

Within fifteen minutes the young officer and his escort of two were galloping along the road to Manila as fast as their little ponies could carry them. In an hour they reined up in front of the office of the Provost Marshal-General. But the place was closed and the sentinel on duty informed them that the General might be found at his quarters.

"It is after business hours," said an Aide as the perspiring little officer climbed the General's veranda, "and the General should not be disturbed unless the business is of the utmost importance."

"Let me see the General and I will convince him of the importance of my mission," answered Lieutenant Milton.

Only one familiar with the weary heart-breaking grind of an officer's work in the Philippines, and the sanctity of his hours of rest, can realize what it meant for an obscure Lieutenant to force his way into the General's private residence, to demand a revocation of

the orders which the General had caused to be promulgated.

But he was working for the honor of a name, and with characteristic tenacity he refused to be denied until the papers which had furnished the evidence in the case were laid before him.

Among these papers was an anonymous letter, without date or heading, which read as follows :—

The Provost Marshal-General,
Manila, P. I.

SIR:—

From information received from a faithful muchacho,[1] I understand that Private Douglas Atwell of Company M, ——th Infantry, is holding correspondence with the Insurgents with a view to selling them rifles and ammunition. Further, I understand that on the night of March 23d, Private Atwell is to meet a number of Insurgents in reer of the regimental storehouse, and assist them in forcing an entrance in order to secure a number of rifles of sick soldiers whose equipment has been stored for the contemplated campaign.

[1] Muchacho—a boy. The term is generally applied to a boy servant.

If some trusted person be sent to the spot indicated at about 12:00 P. M., March 23d, I believe the conspirators may be captured.

Trusting that I may be doing the government a service,

I am very respectfully,
A NON-COMBATANT.

"Our man went down there at the hour indicated," continued the Aide, "and arrested the natives whom he found waiting behind the storehouse."

A search of the natives' clothing resulted in the discovery of these documents. The Aide laid two sheets of paper on the table.

The first was a letter which read as follows:—

Col. Quicoy Siongco,
Manila, P. I.

SIR:—

I am sending you, through one of your faithful spies, a map of the regimental storehouse where a number of the company rifles have been stored. If you will send to the point marked X on this map a number of your surest men, I will meet them there at about 12:00 P. M., March 23d, and we will break into the storehouse by means of some

keys I possess, and I will turn over about ten good, serviceable rifles.

The one who is in charge of your men must carry this letter that I may not be deceived, and of course he must deliver the funds which we have agreed upon before I will act.

Should the bearer be approached by American sentinels or other persons, he should show no fear, and under no circumstances should he run away.

Very respectfully,
DOUGLAS ATWELL,
Private, Co. M, ——th Infantry.

The second document was a map of the regimental storehouse of the ——th Infantry, marked X at the point at which Col. Quicoy Siongco's men were to meet "Douglas Atwell."

Lieutenant Milton had called Klondyke Jones and Russell to compare the handwriting of these documents with that of the letter found on the body of Ramon Pacheco, but the handwriting seemed to bear no apparent resemblance.

"Look," said Russell eagerly as he held the two documents side by side, "the word 'rear'

is misspelled in both letters, and in both, the same mistake has been made. These letters have been written by the same man."

Without this discovery Atwell's innocence was only a matter of inference, but there was the unmistakable evidence of identity in the two letters.

The word rear was spelled "reer" in both cases.

"Now I must see the General," cried Lieutenant Milton exultingly as he turned to the Aide.

"Here I am, young man," said the General, as he entered the room. "What progress have you made in your case?"

The startled group jumped to attention, and there in the presence of Klondyke Jones, the mule driver, Fred Russell, the graduate of the University of California, the Provost Marshal-General of Manila, and his Aide, Lieutenant Milton eloquently presented the case of Private Douglas Atwell, a prisoner charged with treason.

The General folded his arms and listened attentively to the young officer's earnest and convincing defense, and when Lieutenant

Milton paused, he said with a smile, " In spite of the seriousness of the charge, I think your man is acquitted. You may release Atwell from arrest, and I will explain in the morning to the corps commander."

CHAPTER XIV

OFF WITH THE REGIMENT AT DAWN

It was nearly midnight when Lieutenant Milton and his escort rode into camp from the office of the Provost Marshal-General where he had secured authority to release Douglas Atwell from confinement.

The horses were hastily unsaddled, picketed and fed, and the three tired riders walked toward the guard tent where Douglas lay a prisoner.

"Halt! Who's there?" cried the sentinel who faithfully performed the useless task of guarding a prisoner who would meet death rather than attempt an escape.

"Friends," responded Lieutenant Milton.

"Advance one to be recognized," answered the sentinel.

"Remain here, men," said the Lieutenant, addressing Klondyke and Russell, as he advanced toward the sentinel, "and be ready to meet Atwell when I send him out."

Lieutenant Milton entered the guard tent and bent over the prostrate form of the boy.

"Atwell."

"Yes, sir," responded Douglas as he rose and stood at attention. Every trace of anxiety had left him, and he was the same quiet and self-respecting boy who had won the esteem of his associates when but a farmer lad in his Shawangunk Mountain home in eastern New York.

"Atwell," said Lieutenant Milton in a tone which thrilled with kindness and sympathy, yet invited no familiarity, "I have secured authority to have you restored at once to duty. You may return to your tent, and think no more of this affair. I trust to your good sense that this unavoidable humiliation which has been forced upon you, will in no way destroy your self-respect, or arrest your career to honorable distinction. I give you my deepest sympathy and assure you of my fullest confidence. I did not for a moment believe the charge, and though it is apparent that the accusation is groundless, yet we cannot lay hands on the guilty person."

"I cannot express my gratitude, sir," said

Douglas, his voice slightly trembling in spite of his effort to control it.

"Atwell is released, sentinel," said Lieutenant Milton as he emerged from the tent with Douglas, "and now, Atwell," he continued, "only a few of your friends know the nature of the charge. Go right ahead as usual. Maintain absolute silence, and report any new developments to me. Every effort must be made to locate the guilty person."

The restraints imposed by military ethics prevented a full expression of Private Douglas Atwell's gratitude to the Lieutenant, but had he been at liberty to do so, no words could have described the feeling that swept over him as he walked away from that prison tent, free from the odious charge; free to march again in the sweeping ranks that would form at the first break of dawn.

Not a word was spoken as Douglas felt the warm grasp of his comrades and realized that it was through them that he had won his liberty. As the three friends stood together under the swaying bamboo-trees, Douglas heard the story of Klondyke's encounter with Jackson, of the interview with Lieutenant Milton,

of the ride to Manila, and of the "game little Lieutenant's" efforts to free him from the charge against him. Douglas forgot the pain which the occurrence had caused him, as he realized that he possessed such valiant friends.

The sky was suffused with the purple tint of approaching dawn when the three soldiers of the Republic rolled upon their blankets for a few hours of much needed sleep.

One thousand yards separated the two hostile lines whose expectant sentinels lay far out to the front, eyes straining through the darkness for any indication of attempts at surprise. Thousands of armed men lay sleeping on the cartridges whose steel-capped bullets would soon be tearing gaping holes through human flesh, and strewing the fields with dead and wounded; yet such is the nature of the human animal that he sleeps on indifferent to the fate of the approaching day.

Within ten paces of Douglas lay Private Leland C. Jackson, his handsome head resting upon his arm, as he slept upon his rifle. Had he gone to sleep with a guilty conscience?

Douglas could not say, for the man who had forged his name had covered his tracks so ef-

fectually as to defy the efforts of the Provost Marshal-General's office to discover his identity. However conclusive might be the inferences of guilt, no official cognizance could be taken of them until positive, tangible proofs could be secured.

If Private Jackson felt any surprise at seeing Douglas in the ranks at reveille the next morning he carefully masked his feelings, and took his place in the squad with an indifference of manner which suggested nothing at all to the keen and watchful eye of Klondyke Jones.

"But he'll have something else to think about to-day, Klondyke," said Douglas, as the company fell in for breakfast. "I am glad, however, that only my friends know the charge that was trumped up against me, and the incident is likely to be forgotten during the campaign."

A suggestive intermittent sound came to the ears of the speakers.

"What's that, Klondyke?" said Douglas, holding his breath and straining to hear.

"Thet 'ere's musketry," said the "ole sojer." "The fight's begun on th' right. They're

swingin' t' th' left, an' we'll be 'bout th' last t' hit th' Insurgents' line, 'cause we're near th' pivot, but there'll be some good fightin' 'fore th' day is done, an' we'll jest rip this 'ere island clean open from stem t' stern inside o' three months."

Douglas felt a chill creep down his spine as he heard the emphatic words of the old veteran, through whose gallant efforts he was able to share in the glorious campaign, and "march with th' boys at dawn."

It was twenty minutes of six o'clock. The gallant Nebraska regiment, under Colonel Stotsenburg, was assaulting the enemy in an intrenched position in front of San Francisco del Monte, and the successive regiments on their left patiently awaited their turn to attack. General MacArthur's brilliant campaign had begun, and the Nebraskans had been given the privilege of opening the first engagement. It was a natural and well-merited honor, for it will be remembered that the insurrection was precipitated by the Insurgents' attempt, on the night of February 4th, to force their way past the Nebraska's sentinel at the bridge across the San Juan

River; and now as the sun sent up his first fiery glow in the east, the rifles of the Nebraskans hoarsely greeted the dawn.

Before their impetuous charge, the hostile lines broke in confusion, and one by one the regiments from flank to pivot pressed forward to the attack. Lying upon their rifles in the bamboo thickets, the men of the ——th Infantry saw the Third Artillery moving forward on their right, and they knew that their turn would come next.

"Who is that, Russell?" asked Douglas Atwell, as he saw a superbly-mounted officer riding toward the regimental headquarters.

"That is General Wheaton, who commands the brigade," said Russell. "He is one of the finest fighters in the service, and we are fortunate to be under his command."

Evidently the General had ordered the attack, for a bugle-call pealed out from the bamboo near regimental headquarters and the musicians along the line were repeating the notes.

Douglas felt a quickening of his nerves as the line rose and moved forward in obedience to the bugle's voice. As the whole line, eight

miles in length, was conducting a swinging movement over a rough terrain covered with dense bamboo jungles, the fighting necessarily assumed the aspect of a series of detached combats.

Within a few moments after the advance began, the ——th Infantry had lost sight of the rest of the line, and the Third Battalion found itself practically alone. In skirmishes of this kind, the soldier becomes isolated, passes beyond the command of his superiors; individuality manifests itself, and battles are won or lost on his initiative. As the line pressed on through the dense underbrush, Douglas noticed that Corporal Casey paid no attention to him, but had placed himself behind Jackson and watched his every movement, and though Jackson assumed a sneering indifference, it was apparent that he was not enjoying the scrutiny.

The enemy's fire had opened on the advancing line, but the shots flew high and wild, while the sounds of a fierce struggle could be heard off to the right. It seemed that the battalion was to win its position practically without a fight, when a warm fire

opened from a line of entrenchments five hundred yards to the front.

Commands were unnecessary. The long, irritating delay had whetted the desire of the men to fight, and before the terrific musketry of the rapidly advancing line, the Insurgents gave way long before charging distance had been reached. It was a judicious retreat, for behind this force of Insurgents lay the Tuliahan River, swift, deep, and unfordable. Their only avenue of escape was the railroad bridge far to left, toward which they broke in great disorder.

The line plunged forward with desperate energy, but the tangled underbrush flung the Americans on their faces, the straps of the heavily-laden canteen and haversack cut into their flesh, and struggle as they would the light-footed natives reached the bridge and raced into the line of entrenchments on the north bank of the Tuliahan, where one thousand of their comrades awaited their arrival.

The battalion was within one hundred yards of the river when out from the fringe of bamboo and banana-trees on the north bank came the crash of these thousand Mausers, answered

almost instantly by the ready Krags from flank to flank. Flat upon their stomachs the men crept forward, firing as they went, until they halted on the river's brink.

The contending lines were now separated only by the width of the stream, and across its placid surface the duel was raging. It was soon apparent, however, that the Insurgents could not be driven from their position so long as the grim barrier of the Tuliahan lay across their front.

Three plans suggested themselves. The enemy's line might be pierced by forcing a crossing at the railroad bridge, but two thousand Insurgent rifles would be concentrated on the party attempting the crossing, and after inflicting terrible injury, the enemy could withdraw with but slight loss. It was possible to swim the river, leap into the trenches and close the engagement in a hand to hand struggle; but, shackled by his heavy equipment, every soldier wounded in the stream would sink to certain death, and only the most desperate emergency would justify such a course. Finally, it was possible to explore the stream toward its source, cross at the

first practicable ford, and fall upon the Insurgent rear with certainty of victory and the chance of minimum loss.

"And I have a man who can find such a ford," said Lieutenant Milton, as he stood discussing the situation with the other officers of the battalion, on this sweltering afternoon.

"Very well, Milton," said the battalion commander, "when I come for you have your man on hand, and we will see what can be done."

It was Major Greene who spoke, he who had recently been promoted to the command of a battalion. Major Marfeigh, broken in health and worn out by a long and arduous career, had returned to the States, and the fate of the battalion now rested in the hands of Major Greene, his young, hardy, and courageous successor.

When Lieutenant Milton rejoined his company it was late in the afternoon and the fierce glare of the sun fell slantingly on the blistered faces of the exhausted men.

In spite of the advantageous position of the enemy, but few Americans had been hit, while every head or hand that remained above the

Insurgent trench was fortunate to escape with a single wound.

Corporal Casey's valiant spirit never flagged, and while he moved from point to point along his squad, he invariably returned and placed himself within a pace of Private Jackson.

Corporal Casey was kneeling beside him when a malicious face suddenly appeared above the Insurgent trench, behind the barrel of a rifle. A shot rang out across the Tuliahan and the bullet struck the stock and barrel of Jackson's rifle, rising over his shoulder with a shrill whistle, and spattering his face with pieces of wood and lead.

Jackson clapped his hands to his face and rolled over on his back, moaning, "I'm shot! I'm shot!"

"Where?" asked Corporal Casey as he jammed a new cartridge into his rifle to be ready for the next exposure of the Insurgent.

"Through the head," groaned Jackson.

"Be aisy, thin, me lad, fur ye'll get over it. Thim thit's shot through th' head kapes mighty quiet about it th' rest av ther lives. Yer a fine sprig av a sojer, Jackson, indade ye are. But ye've conquered yer ginerous propinsity

t' take care av th' wounded an' that's good in a fightin' man. Rest a while, me lad. I'll kape th' place war-rm fur ye till ye come t' life."

Corporal Casey once more squinted along the barrel of his rifle, while Jackson lay behind a small rise in the ground and trembled in every muscle.

He had certainly had a narrow escape, for the brim of his hat was torn by the jagged bullet as it leaped from his rifle barrel, and blood trickled from lacerations on his cheek.

It was now nearly six o'clock in the evening, and the battalion had had neither rest nor food since eight o'clock that morning. The enemy's fire was subsiding along the whole line, and, no longer held by the fire in front, Douglas Atwell turned his eyes along the line of the squad. There lay Jackson pale as death, with the blood congealing in black drops on his drawn cheek, and the boy's heart melted with pity for his fallen foe. Crawling over to Jackson's side, Douglas asked,

"Where are you wounded? Let me help you."

By a strange coincidence he had repeated

the words he had used, when, searching for wounded after the capture of blockhouse No. 14, he had suddenly come upon Jackson hiding behind a clump of bamboo.

Jackson turned a pale, sick face toward Douglas as if beseeching help which his proud tongue declined to ask.

As the stopper was out of Jackson's canteen, Douglas guessed that the nervous strain of the fight had induced him to drink indiscreetly, and now he was without water to relieve his parched throat. Douglas handed him his canteen, and Jackson drank feverishly, rolled over upon his side, and something very like a tear glistened beneath his eyelids.

Douglas rose to leave him, and stood face to face with Lieutenant Milton and Major Greene, the battalion commander.

Although Lieutenant Milton had seen all that had occurred, his face betrayed nothing, and he addressed Douglas in his usual calm and businesslike tone.

"Atwell," said he, "you made a reconnaissance behind the enemy's lines and reached this river."

"Yes, sir."

"Your report and map showed a ford where you had observed a native wading the river."

"Yes, sir."

"Could you find that ford now?"

"I think I could, sir."

"In the dark?" asked Major Greene.

"Yes, sir."

"How far is it from here?"

"About a mile, sir."

"How deep is the water?"

"Waist to neck deep, sir."

Douglas drew from the pocket of his blue flannel shirt his rough pencil sketch of the ford and its approaches, and handed it to Major Greene.

"The trail we crossed this morning during the advance runs to the ford, I believe. At any rate, I will be able to find it, sir."

"Very well," said Major Greene, "hold yourself in readiness to lead the battalion to that ford at daybreak to-morrow morning."

CHAPTER XV

FORDING THE TULIAHAN

When Douglas Atwell lay in the underbrush and sketched a half naked Filipino wading neck deep across the Tuliahan, he little dreamed that the result of a battle would hinge upon his act. But such was the case. The battalion had been held in front of the unfordable section of the stream by the Insurgents on the opposite bank, and it was now apparent that only one reasonable plan presented itself—that of crossing at the nearest available ford, and of striking the Insurgent trenches in flank and rear. And, by order of Major Greene, the battalion commander, Douglas Atwell was to "lead" the battalion at daybreak to the ford he himself had discovered.

The hostile fire had subsided as the evening approached, and the tired and hungry men rolled back from the little rise along the river

bank, where stacks of empty cartridge shells told the story of the day's work. Wherever slight cover could be secured, the squads lighted small fires, and there, almost under the enemy's parapet, they prepared to cook a hasty meal.

Corporal Casey's squad was never short of provisions, and in a few minutes each of his men had a pint of hot coffee, with warm corned beef and fried bacon to make the dry hardtack palatable. In spite of his blistered lips and the pain in his sunburned face, Douglas ate his allowance with keen enjoyment while he told Klondyke and Russell of the duty that had fallen to his lot. They were delighted to hear of his good fortune and of the prospect of winning new laurels for the gallant old regiment.

Bullets hissed about the groups, but the tired men paid little heed, and like many a young soldier on his first campaign, Douglas marveled that so much ammunition could be expended with so little damage.

The other two battalions of the regiment came up during the evening and bivouacked with their weary comrades.

From right to left the entire line had swept victoriously over the hostile trenches, and Luna's troops were falling back, though still in good order, and stubbornly contesting the field. As darkness closed down across the surface of the Tuliahan, the ——th Infantry withdrew several hundred yards to secure the protection of a slight elevation. Outposts were advanced to the river bank, and a company was designated to guard the crossing at the railroad bridge. Thus protected from the possibility of surprise during the night, the tired soldiers lay down to sleep.

"You will light no fires along the line," said Lieutenant Milton as he moved among his men. "Do not even strike a match. In the morning you will be awakened before daylight, and will get some coffee and hardtack back in the sunken road, where Sergeant Haller and Fagin will be found. The success of your work to-morrow will depend on getting off quietly in the morning."

The company heard with delight the implied statement that some difficult task, some adventure, was to be attempted in the morning, for there is nothing so delights the American

soldier as the difficult, the hazardous, the untried.

Douglas lay between Klondyke and Russell, and soon fell asleep, but Russell lay awake listening to the humorous analysis and criticism of the campaign by the soldier strategists of the company.

"It would have made a dog laugh," said Russell next morning, "to hear 'Von Moltke' Schleusswig, the flying Dutchman, 'Tip' O'Shaughnessy, the 'Fenian,' 'Sneeze' McCarthy, the Russian Jew, and Gregory Chandler of the University of California, discussing and disputing the merits of the campaign."

The dispute was ended, however, at its climax by the peremptory orders of Sergeant Collins "to blow out the gas and go to sleep."

One soldier only lay wide awake and miserable, separated from the rest of his fellows, his pale, nervous face turned toward the cold, pitiless moon that drifted like a ghost across the tops of the swaying bamboos; and that man was Jackson.

Beside him lay his rifle, scored by the bullet which had left its bloody kiss upon his cheek, and Jackson was the only man who

knew that this bullet had been fired from a Krag-Jorgensen rifle; that behind the trenches on the north bank of the Tuliahan were Col. Quicoy Siongco and his band of desperate outlaws.

No one can know the mental anguish that Jackson suffered as he tossed from side to side and wore away the sleepless hours until Reddy Fagin came running along the line, and quietly awakened the men for breakfast. He, Sergeant Haller and Babong had prepared a rough but hearty meal, and the company ate in a silence which invariably settles over troops about to undertake a hazardous enterprise.

It was not yet light enough to see the faces of the men in the ranks when Douglas Atwell moved to the head of the column beside Major Greene and Lieutenant Milton, and led by M Company, the ——th Infantry drew silently out behind its youthful guide toward the ford of the Tuliahan. A thin line of skirmishers had been left behind to open fire at daybreak and hold the enemy's attention while the main body crept around the end of the formidable trench. The stars were still shining like pale candles in the sky, and only

the soft, muffled tread of the men and the gentle clink, clink of the bayonets could be heard as the long sinuous column groped its way slowly along the path where Douglas Atwell led. By order of Major Greene Douglas rode a native pony which had been captured from an Insurgent officer who had been killed during the retreat from the first line of entrenchments on the preceding day, and the gifted little animal selected the path with an intelligence which was very gratifying to his anxious rider.

Like many boys bred to a country life, Douglas possessed a natural preparation for the duty which was now before him.

The stars could guide him, the trees had their message as to the soil that fed them and their proximity to the stream along which the Insurgents lay. Without hesitation he led the regiment farther and farther away from the direction which common observation would dictate, but in half an hour he emerged abruptly upon the trail which he believed led to the ford.

"How far are we from your crossing, Atwell?" whispered Major Greene.

"About three-quarters of a mile, sir," answered Douglas.

"Then deploy your company as advance guard, Milton," said the Major as he turned to his faithful Lieutenant, "and see that the men maintain absolute silence."

As the "point," consisting of a Corporal and three privates, stepped out in obedience to Lieutenant Milton's low command, Major Greene and Douglas Atwell led the way down the narrow trail. So dense was the underbrush that "flankers" could not be sent out to the sides, but the company drew out in detachments increasing in strength toward the regimental column behind, and at the tip of this delicate "feeler" for danger, rode Douglas Atwell and the battalion commander. A half hour passed, and still the tall bamboos enveloped the trail in almost perfect darkness. Douglas' face burned with feverish anxiety as he strained his eyes to the right and left for some familiar mark to assure him that he was following the proper course.

At any moment a volley might ring out down the trail laying the "feelers" dead in their tracks. The delight of Douglas Atwell

may therefore be imagined as he rode out from the overhanging bamboo and beheld the point from which he had made his sketch. Two hundred yards to the front lay the placid surface of the Tuliahan, glittering like a silver sheet behind the green foliage. Douglas drew a breath of relief, then turned to the battalion commander.

"Yonder is the ford, sir," he said.

"Good," returned the Major. "We will cross at once. Lead the way, Atwell."

Douglas urged his little pony down the steep bank, following the course taken by the native whom he had seen wading the stream. Major Greene was beside him, and behind them came the men, with rifles and knapsacks thrust high above their heads, for the water rose to their armpits ere they made their way to the opposite bank.

No point could have been better chosen for the crossing. Far to the left, a road crossed the stream, but, though the bridge had been destroyed, a large force of Insurgents were on guard there. Here, only the inhabitants of an isolated group of houses used this obscure

ford, and not a hostile rifle protected this point of fatal weakness.

"Put your company in line of skirmishers perpendicular to the river, Milton," said Major Greene, as the dripping men scrambled up the bank. "The other companies will go in on your right."

An hour had passed and the sun was blazing over the mountain-tops of Morong before the last man had reached his position, but the ——th Infantry had crossed the Tuliahan without firing a shot, and the rout of the Insurgents was assured.

"You may now rejoin your company, Atwell," said Major Greene. "You have done an invaluable service, and I will take great pleasure in mentioning your name in my report to superior authority. We will score a fine victory to-day through your dexterity and ability to observe."

Douglas shouldered his rifle and returned to Corporal Casey on the skirmish line.

The sun might beat like drops of molten metal upon his head, but he would not feel it; the straps might cut into his flesh, but the flesh would ignore the pain; his lips might

parch, and split and sting, but what cared he—he was drinking from the sweet cup of success, and vindicating a name which an enemy had attempted to defile.

Douglas crushed through obstacles that rose in his path with a strength which surprised even himself as the long skirmish line swept on toward the exposed Insurgent flank.

Engaged by the riflemen who had been left in their front, the Insurgents were lying behind their trenches boasting of how successfully they had stopped the American advance, when Major Greene's skirmish line, supported by another battalion of the regiment, emerged from the bamboo jungle upon their flank.

Under such circumstances the best troops must give way, but the Insurgents fought each other in their frantic efforts to escape. The company which had guarded the railroad bridge during the night now charged across, and added the volume of its fire to that of Major Greene's battalion upon the fleeing enemy.

Sweeping the abandoned trench from end to end, Major Greene gathered up the rifles and trophies of war that strewed the field.

The line halted at the railroad, and the troops on the right flank climbed the slope of a ridge which ran perpendicular to the track. As they appeared upon the summit a deadly fire swept the ridge from a line of entrenchments across the railroad 300 yards to the front, to which the routed occupants of the trench had retreated.

After a rapid inspection of the situation, Major Greene swung the battalion about across the railroad tracks, and advanced to the summit of the ridge. The opposing forces were now located on the crests of parallel ridges with a deep ravine between, while 800 yards beyond the Insurgent position rose the church spires of Malinta. A two-foot stone wall surrounded the church, with trenches extending laterally from the flanks, and already the Insurgents were making ready for the defense of their final position. The enemy had erected tall bamboo poles provided with nipa flags at intervals of about one hundred yards on a straight line from the Malinta church to the railroad bridge across the Tuliahan, and thus the exact range of the American line would be known at every stage of the assault.

Nevertheless, it required but a glance of Major Greene's experienced eye to see that immediate attack was the only possible solution of the problem.

"Fill magazines! Fix bayonets!" were the commands he sent down the eager line. "Rapid fire! Commence firing!"

With his arms folded across his sturdy chest, Major Greene watched his terrific fire gradually crushing down the enemy behind the trenches, and then he turned to the soldier at his elbow.

"Sound the charge, orderly."

Musician Macklin raised his bugle to his lips—Macklin, who had served the regiment for twenty years, he whose wonderful notes had trembled out over the mountain snow-drifts of the Dakotas, had rallied the regiment in the canons of the Colorado; Macklin, who had blown the same defiant notes in the face of howling mobs of hostile Sioux and Apaches, was once more sounding the "charge."

Not a waver showed in the line as it rose as if born of the bugle's voice, and rushed down into the ravine with a mighty cheer

that rolled over the tumult to the trenches of Malinta.

Through the ravine ran a swale of nipa-palm which broke the line and arrested the sweeping charge. Through this swamp, filled with black mud, the men were plunging when Douglas Atwell heard a great shout from the nipa a few paces to the right, and from the swaying and crushing of the tall plants, he knew that a desperate struggle was in progress. Douglas clutched his rifle and rushed through the nipa-palms toward the scene of action.

There was the "Queer Fellow," his face spattered, his hat trampled in the black mud, standing over the prostrate and unconscious body of a native rifleman, while he faced two bolomen with his bayoneted rifle.

"Don't shoot 'em, Atwell, they're th' critters thet butchered Dutchy Schmidt," shouted the "Queer Fellow" as his tense muscles knotted up for a spring. It is impossible to conceive of the suddenness and force of the blow delivered by those muscles of steel, as the "Queer Fellow" leaped upon his opponent and shot forward the butt of his

rifle to the native's chin. The man sank with broken neck, and the "Queer Fellow" dropped upon his knee in time to avoid the third native's bolo as it hissed above his head, and rising beneath the weapon, he drove his bayonet through the native's body.

As the "Queer Fellow" towered like a Roman gladiator over his victims, the nipa-palms parted, and Philip Kelton tumbled headlong in the mud, and with a shield in his left hand and a bloody kampilan in his right, a native followed him.

It was "the Moro."

Douglas dropped his rifle to the guard and gathered all his energies for a lunge, but with a startled glance, the Moro sprang back through the nipa-palms, and vanished like a puff of smokeless powder.

Douglas and Bill Smathers opened a rapid fire upon the nipa swamp, but no sound came back to indicate the whereabouts of the terrible fanatic.

Philip Kelton was desperately, perhaps mortally wounded. His left arm was cut to the bone and badly fractured by a blow of the

kampilan which, if unimpeded, would have cut his head from his body.

As it was, the partially arrested blade had reached his jaw, splitting his cheek from chin to ear.

"Pick up thet 'ere critter's rifle, Atwell," said the "Queer Fellow," "an' fetch it along while I carry Kelton. If it hadn't been fur thet hard farmer's jaw on 'im, thet 'ere whack would hev' took th' head off 'im."

"Can't we do something for these wounded natives?" suggested Douglas as he wiped the blood from Kelton's face.

"Them ain't wounded natives, Atwell. Them's th' critters thet ambushed us on th' road t' Manila day after th' capture o' Passy. Thet 'ere varmint is th' one thet stood in th' road like he wuz an honest lab'rer, an' give th' signal t' shoot us down; th' critter thet tried t' shoot me in the back; an' they belong t' th' gang thet butchered Dutchy Schmidt an' tried t' burn his body. I said thet 'ere day thet if ever I met 'em in a fair an' square fight, they'd git their gruel. We put 'em in prison, but they told stories till they got out an' here they wuz lyin' in th' swamp with

their fangs all whetted t' sting an' git away. No, Atwell, them ain't wounded. Them critters is dead. You needn't send fur no doctor when Bill Smathers gits a rap at a critter thet don't fight fair."

Then the terrible glare left the "Queer Fellow's" eyes as he sank on his knees in the mud, and with the tenderness of a nurse, began wrapping Kelton's wounded arm with a "first aid" bandage.

Slinging his rifle across his back he picked up the unconscious boy, and started toward the trench which the company had already captured several minutes before.

Douglas pulled the native's rifle from the mud and started to follow.

"Bill," said he excitedly, "it's a Krag."

"What number?"

"No. 67,883," said Douglas as he wiped the mud from the breech block.

"Corporal Casey's," said Bill. "Th' one thet wuz stole on February 22d. He won't steal another."

Douglas looked down regretfully on the dead face of the native. No, he would never steal another, but Bill Smathers had wrecked

one more chance of clearing up the mystery of the stolen rifles.

As Douglas and the "Queer Fellow" climbed to the top of the slope with their wounded comrade, they saw the line entering the town of Malinta. Troops on the right had completed the contemplated swinging movement, and the head of one of the columns was crossing the Malinta bridge.

Cartridge shells strewed the slopes, and dead and wounded Americans and natives lay together. It had been a hard and desperate struggle.

A horseman galloped up the hill behind the two soldiers, and called out,

"Where is Major Greene?"

"In Malinta, I s'pose," said Bill. "What d'ye want?"

"Colonel's killed. Major Greene's in command of the regiment," said the orderly as he galloped forward.

CHAPTER XVI

ACROSS THE MARILAO WITH THE TWENTIETH KANSAS

THE ——th Infantry had made the perilous crossing of the Tuliahan, had routed the enemy in three successive stands, and now enjoyed the undisputed honor of having captured the strongly defended city of Malinta; but their valiant Colonel lay dead on the field with many of the bravest sons of the regiment. Major Greene, young, dashing and energetic, yet a tried and gallant soldier, had already assumed the responsibilities of his dead chieftain.

His movement upon the entrenchments of the Tuliahan had been conducted with skill and daring, and his superior officers expressed their gratitude.

"Milton," said he, as he watched the regiment preparing to bivouac for the night on its own victorious battle-field, "we're getting lots of credit for this fight to-day, but when

you boil it down the credit nearly belongs to the soldier every time.

"In these long skirmish line affairs, if we did not have the pure gold of loyalty in our ranks, not a man would ever charge over the enemy's trenches. We can put our men in the proper position, form the skirmish line, and indicate the place to be taken. The soldier then wins the fight on his own courage, and we are practically out of the game, so long as we fight through such jungles as we encountered to-day. The man who deserves most credit for this success is that blue-eyed lad you sent me—Atwell. How long has he been in the service?"

"He is practically a recruit, Major," said Lieutenant Milton, "reported only a few days before the outbreak, but he has done remarkable service, and I expect unusual things from him. His talent for sketching was discovered by pure accident one day when we were making a reconnaissance close up to the enemy's lines in front of Caloocan. He climbed to the top of a big tree and secured in a few minutes a better sketch of the Insurgent position than I could have made after a survey. I sent the

sketch in with my report, and I am told it was of great benefit in selecting points of weakness for the attack of yesterday morning."

Little dreaming of the conversation which engaged the two officers, Douglas sat with Klondyke Jones and Fred Russell and related his experience when the line charged forward on the defenses of Malinta, and he, Kelton and the "Queer Fellow" encountered the bolomen in the nipa swale between the lines.

"Klondyke," Douglas was saying, "the 'Queer Fellow' is a marvel. He would have killed those three bolomen had he been armed only with a club. I never saw such ferocity, and if I did not know Bill's fine character I would have thought him a regular wild beast."

After the fight Bill had remained with Douglas, forgetting his hunger and caring tenderly for Philip Kelton, until the surgeons and hospital corps had relieved them of their patient and assured them that Kelton would "pull through."

"My great regret," said Douglas, "is that I did not close on the Moro quickly enough.

I'm too slow. Bill would have 'skewered' him in the twinkling of an eye. But he got away from me, and we'll find him in front of us again when we least expect him. I've been thinking over the whole affair," continued Douglas, "and coupling up all our experiences, I am inclined to think that our old friend, Quicoy Siongco, was in front of us to-day. Two of the bolomen killed by the 'Queer Fellow' we recognized as members of the gang which ambushed us in the road to Manila on the 6th of February, and one of them had the rifle stolen from Corporal Casey on the night of February 22d.

"We have reason to believe that Col. Quicoy Siongco managed that affair, and where we find the guerrillas there we may expect to find the chief.

"Besides," continued Douglas, as he scraped the black mud from his leggings and trousers, "I've been thinking that our first collision with the Moro occurred that night on the outposts when Ramon Pacheco was killed, and I found that letter on his body which was addressed to Col. Quicoy Siongco and proposed the sale of rifles to the Chino. To-day we

encounter the Moro in company with the three guerrillas, one of whom was carrying the rifle stolen from Captain Casey on the date proposed in the letter. Until to-day I had regarded our experiences as more or less disconnected occurrences, but now I believe the ambuscade on February 6th, the uprisings in the city, the capture of our two rifles, the attack of the Moro on our outposts, and our fight to-day in the swale, are all connected and closely-related events. Col. Quicoy Siongco is responsible for all of them. The Moro is under his orders, and we will have them in front of us all the way up the line."

"Good logic, thet 'ere, but bad news," said Klondyke. "I don't like fightin' thet 'ere yaller-faced mongrel, an' I ain't got much hankerin' fur th' Moro, nuther. Bill Smathers kin have first turn at 'im every time."

"I tell you, boys, I am afraid of him," said Douglas. "He is on my mind every minute, and somehow I have felt from the very first that I would have to fight him sooner or later."

"You whipped him once, Douglas, and you

will do it again if you fight him," said Fred Russell.

"What did yer do with th' captured rifle?" asked Klondyke.

"I turned it over to Lieutenant Milton, and told him of the circumstances," answered Douglas. "While looking for Lieutenant Milton, I ran across Corporal Casey with the rest of the squad, and explained my temporary absence from the line. Jackson was there, and heard every word of the story about our encounter in the swale, and I assure you I was sorry for him. I could see the front of his blue shirt quiver with each beat of his heart as I told of the recapture of one of the stolen rifles. He avoided my eyes and I could watch him as I announced the number, 67,883—Corporal Casey's rifle; Jackson's was still out. I shall never forget the look of disappointment that came over Jackson's face as he heard the announcement."

"You have explained a strange phenomenon, Douglas," said Russell.

"I never knew Jackson to be so completely cowed as he has been to-day, but I understand

now. I wonder if he isn't afraid of being shot to death by his own rifle."

The ——th Infantry had won its place at Malinta after a valiant struggle, but the delay in conquering their well-posted enemy had thrown the right wing of the army well to the front and before darkness had fallen on the 26th of March, Polo had been captured and Mecauayan had been abandoned.

As the American troops advanced upon the captured territory, flames shot up from the roofs of the nipa shacks which the fleeing Insurgents had fired. This wanton and useless destruction of property was explained by the following proclamation found posted on the walls of the railroad station at Mecauayan when the troops entered.

Headquarters of the Military Operations Against Manila.

I, Antonio Luna, General in Chief of Operations, ordain and command from this date forward:

First. The following be executed by shooting without court-martial. (Classes of persons here enumerated.)

Second. All towns which may be aban-

doned by our forces will be burned down. No one deplores war more than I do: I detest it; but we have an inalienable right to defend our soil from falling into the hands of fresh rulers who desire to appropriate it, slaughtering our men, women, and children.

For this reason we are in duty bound as Filipinos to sacrifice everything for our Independence, however great may be the sacrifices which the Fatherland requires of us.

The General-in-Chief of operations,

A. LUNA.

General Headquarters at Polo,
February 15th, 1899.

Although Antonio Luna was the greatest soldier in the ranks of the Insurgent army, and in the main, entitled to respect as a fighter and as a man, this order betrays his misconception of the American character, and of the military necessities of the campaign. He recognized, however, that towns would be "abandoned" and prepared for the contingency as he saw fit.

The complete overthrowal of the first line of defense along the Tuliahan, had now thrown back the main body of Luna's army behind the Marilao River, and on the 27th of March,

General MacArthur advanced almost without opposition upon this position.

The natural order of march of the ——th Infantry threw it into position as reserve, and it was known that the regiment would not go into action that day. This was an appreciated relief from forty-eight hours of almost continuous fighting, and the regiment swung along in a jovial way discussing the thrilling experiences through which it had passed, and making conjectures as to the outcome of the campaign.

As in the engagement at blockhouse No. 14, Company M had borne the burden of the fight, and counted the greatest number of casualties in its ranks. The place of Private Philip Kelton was vacant in Corporal Casey's squad, and similar blank files throughout the company attested its gallant services.

Jackson was in his place, elbow to elbow with Douglas Atwell, but his campaign hat was pulled down over his eyes, and he spoke to no one.

The regiment marched through the ruined streets of Polo and Mecauayan and bivouacked beyond the charred and blackened

remnants of the railroad station at the latter place.

"There will be fighting to-morrow, and lots of it," the head of the column reported, "for the Insurgents are strongly entrenched behind the Marilao, the bridges are down, and the river is unfordable in the vicinity of the crossing."

Energetic preparations were in progress for the attack. Day and night the thud of the sledge hammer could be heard on the railroad track, where the engineers, with a large body of Chinese coolies, were repairing the broken line. So rapid had been the advance that part of the rolling stock had fallen into the hands of the Americans and the actual damages to the railroad had been but slight.

The signal corps had repaired the broken telegraph into Manila and reeled out wire as fast as the skirmishers could advance, and everything was in readiness for the assault on the Marilao on the morning of March 28th.

Douglas Atwell sat deeply engrossed in the study of the proposed theatre of operations from one of the enlarged maps which he had

constructed during the long month of inaction following the outbreak of hostilities, when Lieutenant Milton approached him.

"Atwell," said he, "your maps are gaining you a reputation. You are to go to the front, by General MacArthur's orders, and give Colonel Funston of the Twentieth Kansas the benefit of your maps and your study of the terrain. There is a mounted man from the Kansas regiment awaiting you, and you will ride forward with him."

Douglas folded his maps in a piece of oil-skin, and returned them to his haversack. He was somewhat startled by the responsibility which this new situation placed upon him, but if his superior officers found any merit in his work he did not feel himself called upon to protest against their judgment. Officers in the field had been partially supplied with maps of the theatre of operations, but these maps were on too small a scale to supply any valuable information which would guide the smaller units in the campaign. Realizing this, Lieutenant Milton had secured every available piece of information which the archives of Manila could furnish, and had caused

Douglas to develop maps showing the most minute features of the terrain.

Each map, two feet square, covered about a day's march and was devised to enable a commanding officer to record his position during an engagement for the benefit of future history.

As Douglas galloped forward with Ramsey, the strapping young Kansan, scattered firing could be heard to the front, and regiments could be seen moving out of the column and deploying into thin lines of skirmishers.

Douglas well knew the nature of the Marilao, with its high railroad crossing, its swift current, and deep and muddy bottom, and his month's study of this kind of data had taught him that a hard fight would result from the effort to force a crossing.

"Yes, we will have a lively fight," said Ramsey. "'The Tuliahan was captured,' the Insurgents say, 'but the Americans will perish on the banks of the Marilao, and we will then hurl the insolent invaders into the sea.'"

"They said something like that the night before the outbreak," answered Douglas, "but

we have managed to keep out of the ocean, and I hope to see the Marilao behind us to-night."

"There is Colonel Funston now," said Ramsey. "He will take us across if it is possible. I will take you over to him, and then I am to rejoin my company."

Ramsey rode up to his Colonel and reported his return with Private Atwell of the ——th Infantry.

"Well, Atwell, what can your maps tell us of the ground in front?" asked Colonel Funston, with such easy affability that Douglas felt at once as if he had fallen into the company of a lifetime friend, and he unfolded his map without anxiety or hesitation.

"I am not at all sure that it is correct, sir," said Douglas, "there has been no means of going over the ground."

"We will go over it now," said the Colonel as he examined the map, "and we will trust to your accuracy."

The song of the Mauser was already sounding in the soldiers' ears when Colonel Funston put his regiment in motion for the banks of the Marilao. To Douglas Atwell's dismay the

regiment soon found itself in a marsh, into which the men sank from knee to waist deep.

"I don't see this on your map, Atwell," said the Colonel.

"No, sir, I had no knowledge of its existence," answered the boy blushing deeply. "There is better ground to the left, sir," he added apologetically.

"Let them go. They like it," said the Colonel, as he watched his husky lads wading through the swale like young ducks.

When the line emerged from the marsh they were within five hundred yards of the river, and the trenches across the Marilao poured forth a stinging challenge to the "invaders." Except that the Insurgents accepted battle only from the shelter of the trenches behind the Marilao, the gallant advance of the Kansans was in all respects similar to the advance of the ——th Infantry upon the Tuliahan, until Colonel Funston stood on the banks of the stream which protected the enemy.

The railroad bridge had been partially destroyed, and the north bank of the stream bristled with the spiteful Mausers. It would

cost thousands of lives to carry that river against a line of American soldiers, but the native cannot stand the strain of a struggle at close range.

In a few moments the Kansans had secured the superiority of fire, and the Insurgents sank behind their trenches, and fired by resting their rifles on the top of the parapet. Thus, as in preceding engagements, the Insurgents could pour a destructive stream of bullets in the American ranks, and suffer but slight injury in return.

Douglas Atwell walked behind Colonel Funston, and feverishly longed for another ford such as the Tuliahan had furnished.

How the bullets cracked and howled as they glanced up from the hard earth and tore the bamboo into shreds; how the sun scorched the dripping faces of the soldiers, how sick and faint Douglas felt as he heard the dull "spat" of a bullet as it burned a stinging path through the body of a man at his feet, and he saw the blood trickle from his lifeless body.

As a soldier on the line, the friendly crack of his own rifle drowned out all of this, but

now he realized the officer's part in the struggle.

How long would the strain continue? At every point in front of the Kansans the Marilao was unfordable, but on the north side of the river beneath the Insurgent trenches lay a number of cascos and bamboo rafts. Here, then, was a means of forcing a crossing, a means which had not escaped the attention of Colonel Funston. If so strong a fire were concentrated on the trenches that the Insurgents could not rise to see what the Kansans were doing, a small number might swim across the stream, bring back the rafts and cascos, and ferry across underneath the canopy of fire that would pass harmlessly above them.

In a few moments preparations to execute the plan were in progress. At Colonel Funston's request, a Colts' machine gun, under Lieutenant Davis of the navy, came up, and a little later, some artillery from the Utah Battery.

Then Colonel Funston called for volunteers and stated the plan. From the vast number that responded he selected a few and then gave his orders.

The line poured out its fire with redoubled energy, while like a garden hose the Colts' machine gun sprayed the top of the enemy's trench at the rate of ten shots per second.

While the guns of the Utah Battery punctuated this terrific clamor with its deep-toned roar, the selected men of the Kansas Regiment stripped off their clothing to swim the stream.

"May I go with them, sir?" asked Douglas.

"If you wish," responded Colonel Funston.

Douglas pulled off his clothing with feverish haste, reached the river bank and plunged in with the eager Kansans. The Insurgent fire had been completely overwhelmed, and with a few powerful strokes the swimmers crossed the stream in safety, and were upon the rafts. Tearing away the moorings, they seized the long bamboo poles, and shoved off into the stream, and Douglas Atwell found himself poling shoulder to shoulder on a raft with Corporal Drysdale, a man whom he was destined to know and admire on other fields when the experiences of the Filipino Insurrection would be but a memory.

Not a head rose above the trenches to locate the swimmers, but the rifles were held high above the Insurgents' heads with muzzles depressed, and a plunging fire lashed the stream as in a storm, yet no one was hit.

As Douglas and Corporal Drysdale reached the shore, Colonel Funston and a number of his men leaped upon the raft, and shoved off toward the Insurgent trench.

The assault would not be made until a sufficient number had crossed, and Douglas managed to dress and jump upon the last raft to carry the small storming party.

Colonel Funston and his men were already creeping along the edge of the river, and when the end of the trench was reached they moved behind a bamboo hedge, and turned toward the enemy. One breathless moment followed as the little party awaited the cessation of fire from their own ranks, and then this handful of men uttered a mighty shout and charged on the Insurgent flank.

The Tuliahan had taught its lesson. Without waiting to estimate the numbers in the attacking party the terrified Insurgents fled in disorder.

Other points on the stream had been pierced about the same time by attacks equally valiant, and the whole Insurgent army was rolling back from a position they had thought impregnable.

A signal victory had been won for the American arms; the road to Malolos, the Insurgent capital, lay open; the Marilao had been conquered, and though his maps had proved a small factor, Private Douglas Atwell had played a conspicuous and gallant part in the operations of the day.

CHAPTER XVII

CORPORAL CASEY LOSES A GALLANT SOLDIER

THE bugles were sounding in the streets of Malolos, and the men of the ——th Infantry, with belts filled with ammunition, were hurrying into ranks. Once more the battle line was to sweep over the hostile trenches, after a month's rest from the hardships of the campaign, and the alert and jovial manner of the men indicated the relish with which they accepted the resumption of active operations.

Major Greene, mounted on a fine American horse, trotted out into the plaza. The line came to attention at his ringing command, and with arms at the right shoulder, swung into column of fours down the streets of Malolos which led toward Quingua.

"Route step! March!"

The erect, silent men broke from the cadenced step to the march at will, jokes ran from lip to lip, and rifles were carried at the convenience of the soldier.

"I'm glad t' git at 'em agin," said Klondyke Jones, as he slung his rifle across his back and hitched his pouch more comfortably within his belt. "We ain't had no fightin' fur a month, an' th' critters is gittin' purty sassy, jest like they wuz th' week 'fore th' rumpus began. Th' wuz loud talkin' a month back o' a death struggle in th' trenches o' Malolos round th' sacred banners o' th' revolution, but when the lines come rollin' crost th' rice-fields, them lads concluded t' delay th' death struggle fur a pleasanter day. Th' wa'n't 'nouf fightin' in 'em at Bocane, Bigar, Giuginto an' Malolos all put t'gether to make a good skirmish in th' ole days, but they say the'll be trouble to-day, fur 'cordin' t' rumor, we're t' tackle th' Calumpit line. Ain't them 'ere 'bout th' facts, Douglas?"

"Yes, that is the idea, I believe," said Douglas.

"Well, what d'yer maps say 'bout th' place?"

"The Insurgents ought to make a hard fight to-day, if they intend to stand at all. The maps and the information at hand show the river to be deep and unfordable, and the

enemy has had plenty of time to entrench on the north bank. The three important points in front of us are Balinag, Quingua and Calumpit, which is on the railroad where it crosses the Calumpit River. All of these towns lie on the north side of the river, which flows straight across our front, and Quingua, upon which we are now marching, is the central point. I think we will have a hard fight getting across."

"Aye, what was that?" called out one of the men.

"Thet 'ere's th' song o' th' bullet," said Klondyke, as he pulled his rifle back over his shoulder, and tightened up his gun-sling preparatory to action. "She's singin' her song high in th' air this mornin' like a skylark, but I reckon I kin never mistake th' tune. Listen! There's anuther. 'Tain't no use dodgin'. No man thet was ever hit heard th' song o' th' bullet thet hit 'im, thet 'ere is sartin."

The regiment had scarcely passed beyond the outposts of Malolos, but the line of Insurgents which constantly hung on the American front were already sending forth their challenge from the jungle.

The advance guard deployed into a thin line of skirmishers, and each shot from the enemy drew a quick response from the "Krags."

Ten thousand Insurgents under Luna lay behind the entrenched position in front, which stretched from Calumpit to Balinag with its centre at Quingua, and at the latter point the men of the ——th Infantry were to force a passage, strike the Insurgent trenches in flank, and thus make it possible for General Wheaton to force his way across the railroad bridge at Calumpit.

A month had been spent in Malolos, the first capital of the Revolutionary Government, and the men were now eager for battle. During the period of inaction which followed the fall of Malolos, the Insurgents had crept around General MacArthur's flank, and made a concerted attack on the railroad line of communications.

It was loudly proclaimed that the garrisons in Manila would be driven into the bay before the bayonets captured from the dead bodies of American soldiers from Malolos to Caloocan.

At every point, however, the attack had failed, but the scattered bands of guerrillas, disguised as citizens, still hung on General MacArthur's flank, to fraternize with the strong, and ambush the weak escorts that passed between adjacent stations.

These detached groups of guerrillas must be brushed away before General MacArthur could weaken his line by a further attenuation, and while the men of the ——th Infantry were plunging through the jungle toward Quingua, General Lawton was sweeping north with a column from Manila, and already the guerrillas were rolling back before his rifles at Navaliches and Norzagaray.

When Generals Wheaton and Hale had broken through the defenses of Calumpit and Quingua, General Lawton would fling himself upon the Insurgent flank at Balinag, while the advance of gunboats up the Calumpit River would complete one of the most far-reaching victories which the American arms had yet scored.

In the execution of this general plan, our friends of the ——th Infantry were destined to play a gallant and conspicuous part, and

now as General Hale's Brigade pressed on through the underbrush, the regiment felt out gradually to the right toward the banks of the Quingua. The ——th Infantry held the extreme right of the line, and in the dense jungles along the approaches of the river, the regiment soon lost contact with the rest of the brigade.

Little resistance was encountered until the line found itself on the banks of the river, facing a long line of entrenchments on the north side. Here again was the problem of the Tuliahan, of the Marilao, except that no bridge of any kind lay within reach of the regiment. Again the same desperate fight for a few moments, the same scorching sun beating mercilessly upon heads and backs, the same regrettable list of killed and wounded, and the final overwhelming of the enemy's fire by the American soldiers' superiority in aim and courage.

Company M held the extreme right of the line, and as soon as the enemy had been forced to "keep down" by the hail of bullets, Lieutenant Milton stooped over his red-headed Corporal, his valiant support in the hour of need.

"Corporal," said he, "bring out your squad, and come with me. We are going to make a crossing."

In a moment Corporal Casey had his squad disengaged and stood waiting for orders.

"Send two men back to that little shack on the trail and have them bring up the rope which was lying alongside the shack."

"Jones an' McFadden fur th' rope. Be quick," commanded Corporal Casey, as they dashed off to obey. It was needless to call the attention of these two old veterans to details. They had seen the shack and the rope, and Corporal Casey knew they would overtake him as he urged along the rest of the squad behind the nimble little Lieutenant who was following a carabao trail toward the river bank.

Philip Kelton was still absent from the squad—in the hospital at Manila recovering from the wounds received at the hands of the Moro in the nipa swale in front of Malinta. Jackson was in line, haggard and trembling, nervously wetting his parched lips with his tongue, as he furtively glanced from side to side, but Corporal Casey was behind him, and

this red, freckled face bore no expression of sympathy as he trampled upon the heels of this heart-sick private, and growled his eternal command—"Kape closed! Kape closed up!"

Dragging the long rope behind them, Klondyke Jones and Skaguay McFadden reached the river bank almost as soon as their comrades, and now began the perilous effort to cross.

No friendly raft or casco lay moored to the opposite bank, and the stream was clearly unfordable—but it must be crossed.

Not a word was spoken, but while part of the squad knelt with loaded rifles and watched the trench, the rope was made fast to the base of a bamboo-tree, and then with one sweep of his powerful arms, the "Queer Fellow" flung the rest of the squad aside, and dived into the river with the free end of the rope.

When he rose to the surface he was in midstream, the frayed end of the rope between his teeth and his rifle in his left hand. Douglas had hoped for a share in the work, but he felt himself a mere boy in the presence of these old Trojans of the plains.

Bearing his total equipment of nearly thirty pounds, and hauling a fifty-foot rope, the "Queer Fellow" ploughed through the water like an ocean liner, and with the audacity of his kind, he clambered up the Insurgent trench to within two feet of the muzzles of blazing rifles. For a moment Douglas Atwell held his breath.

Was the "Queer Fellow" going to leap alone into that trench and attempt to hang the occupants?

"No, th' 'Queer Feller' niver did nothin', no matter how queer, t' spile th' plans o' an officer," whispered Klondyke, as Bill dexterously drew up the slack of his rope, and made fast by the knot that never slips to a bamboo stake that formed part of the trench itself.

The feat of the Marilao had been surpassed, and Bill Smathers slipped his bayonet on his rifle, and crouched over the end of his cable to settle accounts with any inquiring head that might rise above the Insurgent trench.

The squad stood ready to cross.

"Jackson first," said Corporal Casey, as he handed the young collegian the end of the rope, and pressed him forward into the stream.

"They kin all cross aisy 'nouf," said the Corporal with an air of confidence as he saw Jackson reach the other shore.

"Send them all over, Corporal, while I get another detachment from the company to come to your support," said Lieutenant Milton as he hurried back toward the line. "Don't attack until I am with you."

As the Insurgents were persistently sticking to the bottom of their trenches and only occasionally showing a head, the fire from the American line gradually slackened until only an occasional shot rang out along the front of M company.

Believing that the attack was drawing off, a group of Insurgents rose and discovered the rope ferry, just as Lieutenant Milton arrived on the opposite bank with reinforcements.

It was the danger which Corporal Casey dreaded, and for which the only possible course was attack at all hazards.

With a wild shout, Corporal Casey sprang over the parapet, thrusting Jackson before him, and the little squad of seven men was face to face with one hundred and fifty Insurgents in a hand to hand encounter.

Before the terrible execution of the magazines and bayonets of the Krags, the panic-stricken Insurgents were recoiling in inextricable confusion, when out from their midst came a glistening black figure armed with a shield and kampilan, and with screams that echoed far up the Quingua, he commanded the herd to stand and fight.

It was the Moro, Inac the juramentado, and his wild call rallied the mob—rallied them, save for Col. Quicoy Siongco and most of his cowardly guerrillas, to whom the Moro screamed in vain.

Like a wild jungle beast, the Moro crouched over his glittering kampilan and led the charge of one hundred natives against this little group of seven.

The few seconds' delay had given time to reload, and as the mob came on, awkwardly huddled together, they fell like ninepins before the American rifles.

Twice Douglas Atwell fired at the Moro and twice he missed, and as the last shot failed, he sprang forward to meet his enemy, and his bayonet crossed the Moro's kampilan.

Fred Russell's words flashed across his

mind—"Attack! attack! Don't give him time to assume the aggressive," and with the energy of despair he lunged at his opponent. Again and again he drove his bayonet at the black, glistening chest, but the Moro danced out of danger, and each effort drew Douglas farther into the struggling circle.

At any moment he might feel the keen edge of a bolo upon his head, but he could not stop, and redoubled his efforts to reach his antagonist. Fred Russell sank before his eyes, and half consciously he perceived that he had stepped over the body of Skaguay McFadden.

Only five were left to fight this terrible battle, and now Douglas saw a guerrilla with eyes upon him, raising a rifle to take aim.

Instinctively he hesitated, and half turned his head. It was the distraction for which the Moro had waited, and instantly he assumed the aggressive.

A rapid side step forced Douglas to turn his back upon the rifleman, and with lips drawn back and teeth set, the Moro prepared for his spring. It was a moment of supreme anxiety, in which Douglas seemed to live an

age each second. He could hear the shots ringing in his ears, the shouts of the reinforcements as they splashed in the water below the trench, and he saw the Moro's toes dig into the earth as he sprang forward and swung his kampilan.

Up shot Douglas Atwell's rifle, the motion Babong had taught him, and the kampilan was shattered into fragments on the rifle barrel, just as Lieutenant Milton appeared upon the trench.

"Come on, men! Come on!" he shouted as he saw the desperate situation below him, and drawing his revolver, he sprang into the trench at Douglas Atwell's side.

A rush of panting, dripping men followed him, and in a few seconds of terrific fighting the Insurgents were swept from the field in great disorder.

In spite of all Douglas Atwell's efforts, the Moro escaped, and the exhausted boy sank upon the ground, in anger and disappointment, while a few feet away he saw Bill Smathers rolling upon the ground with his hands clenched upon the throat of a struggling native.

From the gallant fellow's chest, the blood gushed in great spurts, for Bill Smathers was mortally wounded.

The company rushed on in pursuit of the Insurgents, and Douglas Atwell, with tears in his eyes, knelt over his fallen comrade, for he realized the situation at a glance.

The native whose throat was in the terrible grip of the "Queer Fellow's" hands was he who was raising his rifle when the Moro forced Douglas to turn his back upon the impending death.

Having vanquished all before him, the "Queer Fellow" had turned to see the threatening barrel leveled at the boy's back while the Moro was making ready for his leap. With one spring, the "Queer Fellow" was upon the rifleman, but the weapon was turned upon him as he came, and the native fired and rolled headlong beneath his rush. The bullet intended for Douglas had pierced Bill Smathers through and through, but he held his executioner a prisoner in his dying grasp.

Douglas knelt beside him and released his fingers from the throat of the half conscious

"YOU SAVED MY LIFE, BILL," SAID DOUGLAS

Insurgent, and Klondyke Jones, untouched by bolo or bullet, hastened to his side.

"You saved my life, Bill," said Douglas as he brushed back the wet, shaggy hair from the "Queer Fellow's" forehead, and struggled to restrain his tears.

The "Queer Fellow" took Douglas' hand in his and pressed it between his rough palms, and then against his face.

"I'm glad I did," he said slowly. "Ye see, I kinder loved ye, lad, like ye wuz a gal. I never see any one so gentle like a gal, an' so gritty like a man. I gin ye my life, but ye 'member th' day down on th' road t' Manila, when we wuz ambushed, ye saved me from th' guerrilla varmint thet wuz a-tryin' t' shoot me in th' back. I tol' ye then, little pard, thet if ever ye wuz in a tight pinch ye cud depend on Bill Smathers t' stand by ye t' th' last ditch, an' Bill Smathers keeps his word."

The steel blue eyes slowly closed and the pallor of approaching death settled over the face of one of the bravest men that ever marched in the ranks.

"Good-bye, Klondyke, good-bye, little

pard," he said feebly, "an' say good-bye to any o' th' boys thet wants a partin' word from Bill Smathers. I'm glad—I'm goin' this 'ere road. It's th' proper way fur a good sojer."

Douglas laid the brawny arms across Bill Smathers' chest as the company returned from the pursuit of the enemy. The "Queer Fellow" was dead, and on every hand were heard expressions of deepest regret, as the company assembled to take note of its losses.

In the early stages of the fight, Jackson was slightly wounded in the left hand, and escaped from the trench, leaving his comrades alone to meet the Moro's charge; and now he returned to the blood-stained field with his hand swathed in a large "first-aid" bandage.

The native whom the "Queer Fellow" had choked into a stupor, was slowly regaining consciousness, and rolled over on his back, revealing the rifle with which he had dealt Bill Smathers his mortal wound.

"Thet 'ere's a Krag-Jorgensen," exclaimed Klondyke Jones, as he snapped up the rifle and glanced at the number.

A hush fell on the company as Klondyke raised his flashing eyes to Jackson's face.

"Thet 'ere is yourn, Jackson," he shouted, as he rapped the number on the breech with his clenched fist. "There's yer number," he said in a low tone as he thrust the rifle in Jackson's face. "Ye've killed Bill Smathers jest as much as th' critter thet shot 'im."

Jackson made a great effort to meet the gaze of those piercing eyes, but his head sank upon his chest, and he fell forward in a dead faint.

Lieutenant Milton and Douglas Atwell were the only two spectators who completely understood the meaning of this incident, for Fred Russell was lying on the field where he had fallen, and Corporal Casey was binding up his wounded shoulder.

Klondyke had spoken in a low tone so that few had heard, and all enquiry as to the meaning of this strange proceeding, was made impossible by a bugle call from the direction of battalion headquarters, commanding the lines to move forward.

The rest of the regiment had forced a passage at a foot-bridge, and elsewhere along the line, and all was ready for a sweeping advance along the north bank of the Quingua.

"Corporal Casey," said Lieutenant Milton,

"all that is left of your squad will take charge of the dead and wounded. Bring up the Chinese litter-bearers and follow the line far enough back to be out of danger."

"Very well, sir," said the Corporal, as he stood erect and respectfully saluted, though the blood was pouring from a seam which a bullet had cut across his cheek, and his arms and legs bore numerous bolo wounds.

As the company once more advanced in line of skirmishers behind its intrepid little commander, Corporal Casey, Douglas and Klondyke, followed with a detachment of Chinese litter-bearers carrying the wounded—Skaguay McFadden, Fred Russell, and Leland C. Jackson, while a fourth litter bore the dead body of Bill Smathers.

Jackson lay silent and stupefied upon his litter, and his comrades avoided him with a feeling approaching aversion.

The sounds of intermittent skirmishing came from the front, but Corporal Casey's squad was out of action and trudged along in the rear of the line. The defenses of the Calumpit had been pierced through the valiant services of Company M, and the Insurgent

flank at Balinag now lay at the mercy of General Lawton.

When the troops bivouacked that night on the banks of the Quingua, General Hale felt confident of a sweeping victory along the Calumpit.

"We cannot reach the railroad to-night," said Lieutenant Milton, as Corporal Casey rejoined the company, "so we will have to bury our dead upon the river bank. Turn over all the wounded, including Jackson, to the hospital, and then take charge of the funeral escort, and make up a squad to fire the salute."

So as the sun was sinking upon the victorious brigade, Douglas Atwell, Klondyke Jones and Babong, the Igorrote, dug a grave in a beautiful cocoanut grove on the banks of the river, and lined it with banana leaves.

Corporal Casey marched out a squad and halted it beside the grave, and Lieutenant Milton and his company stood with bared heads while Douglas and Klondyke gently laid the body of Bill Smathers on its last bed. Then they covered the dead soldier with long, slender leaves, and stepped back among their silent comrades.

Corporal Casey's voice was husky and tremulous as he gave the command.

"Squad ready! Aim! Fire!"

Three times the rifles roared out across the grave their final salute to the army's dead, and as the echoes of the last volley died away, Musician Macklin raised his bugle to his lips, and blew out "taps"—a long, quavering farewell that trembled far up the reaches of the Quingua to the spot where Bill Smathers heroically gave up his life.

CHAPTER XVIII

CAMPAIGNING IN THE RAINY SEASON

"Boys," said Douglas Atwell, "we are going back to the trenches at Pasay. Lieutenant Milton has given the order to the First Sergeant, and we are to take the train in the morning."

"Good," shouted several of the men, "but why are we going to Pasay?"

"To relieve a regiment of volunteers which is to return to the States."

"Well, thet 'ere ain't bad news," said Klondyke Jones. "The rainy season is on, an' inside o' a month we will all be climbin' trees t' git our heads above th' water, an' I'd jest as soon roost in the branches at Pasay as here."

Notwithstanding Klondyke's view of the case, the situation was full of embarrassment for the government. The period of enlistment of the state volunteers had expired, and it was

now necessary to return them to their homes for muster out, though every available soldier was needed to man the lines.

Congress had authorized the enlistment of new volunteers to take the place of the State troops, but as yet none of the new organizations had arrived.

It was necessary to comply with the order, however; General MacArthur's troops were "stretched" to cover the territory made vacant by the withdrawal, and in a few days, the ——th Infantry was marching out along the road to Pasay to occupy the trenches which they themselves had partially erected after the capture of blockhouse No. 14, and the earthworks beyond.

The effect of two preliminary storms which had already dropped from the clouds, suggested what the conditions would be after a month of continuous rain.

In the assignment to positions in the line, it fell to the lot of M Company to occupy the trenches which extended straight across the open rice-fields with the right near Pasay and the left extending toward San Pedro Macati. It was the natural order of things

that the rice-fields should be flooded at this season, and so the company found them.

Three inches of mud and water lay over the whole surface of the camping site, while heavy clouds were gathering in the sky as the company slid and stumbled through the mud toward its assigned position.

A sick and weary regiment of volunteers joyfully relinquished command of the trenches and turned toward Manila to prepare for "home."

Three months' exposure to the hardships of the campaign had thinned their ranks, but their hearts were light as they thought of the friends who awaited them on their native soil.

The ——th Infantry, too, showed thin ranks, and on every face was a yellow pallor laced with deep, hard lines, indicating wasted energies, and rapid decline. The climatic conditions were approaching their worst, and the health and spirits of the men were declining accordingly.

Our young friend had not escaped the effects of his hard and faithful service, for the fine color of his boyish face had gone, and

with it twenty pounds of precious flesh, but his fortunes as a soldier had prospered.

As Douglas stood in the trenches on the last day's service on the north line, Lieutenant Milton handed him a large official looking document with the words :—

"Atwell, there is your commission as a Corporal. You have won it handsomely, and in spite of your youth I feel confident that you will justify my selection."

And now, as the ——th Infantry returned to the trenches it had left three months before, Corporal Douglas Atwell marched in the ranks with his new chevrons on his sleeve for the first time.

Klondyke Jones once more declined the honor. "I'll serve my life out as a private," said the "ole sojer," "jest as Bill Smathers done, an' when I go t' jine Bill, I hope it 'll be 'long the same road."

And without the slightest appearance of resentment or superiority, this gallant old veteran of twenty years' service took his place as a private in Corporal Atwell's squad.

Every man in the company approved the "make," and the future now seemed to hold

for our young friend, a bright prospect of honorable distinction.

Jackson was still absent in the hospital at Corregidor Island, where he had been since the tragic death of Bill Smathers on the banks of the Quingua by a bullet from Jackson's rifle in the hands of a guerrilla. Upon his return from the hospital he would have to submit to the command of Corporal Douglas Atwell, who had succeeded to the place left vacant by the promotion of Corporal Casey to a sergeantcy.

"But he will not soon return, Douglas," said Fred Russell, as they arranged their equipments in the little rookery which was to serve them as a "home" along the flooded trench in the rice-fields. I have been lying on a cot beside him at the hospital until to-day, and I can assure you 'Leel' is not going to leave that happy home for this mud bird's nest, not if Leel can manage it. He has had a hard time of it. His wounded hand was well in a few days, as the bullet only touched him, but he developed a case of hysteria which was promptly followed by an indisposition which the surgeons have failed to diagnose. I am

told he is trying to get a discharge by favor of the Secretary of War, and hopes to leave the hospital for a transport bound for 'Frisco."

"I have often wondered why he came into the army at all," said Douglas.

The first drops of rain were falling in the muddy water in front of the "rookery," and Douglas and Russell crawled inside. Such was the disposition along the line that each little bamboo rack must accommodate two soldiers, and Douglas had chosen to bunk with Fred Russell.

"Let us get inside our happy home," said Russell, as he scraped the mud from his shoes and crawled beneath the nipa roof, "and I will then tell you why 'Leel' is in the army. You see we came in with a rush," he continued as he flung a poncho over his head, and settled back on his haversack.

"The troops were swarming into 'Frisco, and nothing was talked about but the expedition to the Philippines. Admiral Dewey had won a great victory and we were all exulting in the hero's glory, eager for a share in the honors yet to be won, and the hottest foot, the

most restless war-dog in the whole college was our good friend, Leel.

"We all got together one day and talked it over, and then and there bolted for a recruiting office and 'took on.' The ——th Infantry, a gallant old regular regiment with a fine reputation, was about to sail, and the majority of us secured assignment to it, and cast our lot with Company M.

"The night before we enlisted, Leel was in high spirits, and told me that it was only necessary for him to win a little glory, and that the congressman of his district would be forced to give him the next appointment to the Military Academy at West Point.

"So Leel's in the army to win a cadetship at West Point. He certainly has distinguished himself, but how far that distinction will carry him toward West Point, still remains to be seen."

"Do you think he still wants it?" asked Douglas.

"I imagine he has seen the other side of the hero card by this time, and merely wants to be discharged from further performance in that rôle," answered Russell. "Leel is ex-

ceedingly fond of the display which he foolishly imagined was the principal part of the military life, but he hates the responsibilities, the exactions, the drudgery which the profession demands. Incapable of leading, equally unwilling to follow, Jackson is the last man in the world to send to the Military Academy to be converted into an officer of the United States Army."

The rain was coming down now in torrents, and the thunder shook the earth. Water was dripping through the "house," which consisted of portions of a demolished shack which the volunteers had used for patching up a shelter when the first big storm nearly floated away the tents.

A section of floor consisting of bamboo slats was lying on two horizontals about three feet above the ground, and two pieces of nipa roofing rested slantingly on a ridge-pole which in turn rested on top of the trench, and was supported at the front end by a crotched upright.

Through the ragged union of the pieces of nipa roof the water poured in streams, while the soft mud from the parapet rolled down on

the bamboo floor and dripped through to the stream below.

It was six o'clock, and beneath an abandoned shack, a quarter of a mile down the line, Reddy Fagin and Babong were struggling to cook a supper with water-soaked fuel.

Douglas and Russell wrapped themselves in their rubber ponchos and rolled in as far as possible underneath the slanting roofs to escape the water that fell in the centre.

"I don't think I want any supper to-night," said Russell as he peered out into the blinding storm. "Hello! Who's that?"

A soldier wrapped in rubber poncho and armed with rifle and belt was slushing along through the rising flood. Just as he arrived in front of the "house," he stepped on the top of a rice dyke, slipped, and fell upon his back in the mud and water.

"Consarn thet 'ere," said he as he sat up and tried to rise. "I didn't 'list, by ginger, as a sailor, an' 'tain't no fair t' send me t' sea."

"Stop a trolley, Klondyke, and go down like a landsman," shouted Russell.

"Hello, lad," said the "ole sojer" as he

crawled to his feet and held out a muddy, dripping hand. "Glad t' see ye back. I knowed ye'd be out jest as soon as yer wound would let ye. Ye ain't a half bad sojer fur a college lad."

"Thanks, Klondyke, thanks; but what in the world brings you out a night like this?"

"Goin' on outpost."

"Outpost! What use is there for an outpost a night like this?"

"Thet 'ere ain't the way you'd feel 'bout it to-morrer mornin' if one o' them critters got in an' chopped yer head off durin' th' night. Better hold fast t' yer moorin's, fur this 'ere's a reg'lar typhoon thet's a-howlin' up the seas, an' she's a-goin' t' slat things in a little bit. Peg yerself down."

The wind had already risen and was racing through the house with an ominous whistle, and driving the drenching rain in upon the two young men. Klondyke had not gone fifty yards when the wind struck the shacks and lifted the two pieces of roofing as if they were straws.

Eager to shield his wounded comrade from the rain, Douglas jumped to his feet to pursue

his flying roof, and the light bamboo floor, no longer held down by his weight, up-tilted and dropped Fred Russell in a foot of water.

"Stop an ocean liner, an' pull fur th' harbor, Freddie," shouted Klondyke; "they say the's a storm brewin'."

The "ole sojer" was standing nearly knee-deep in water, holding his drenched hat on his head, while his poncho stood out in the gale like a flag from a masthead.

Other "houses" down the line had been wrecked also, and the homeless ones were pursuing their goods and chattels as they drifted down-stream. Company M was hungry, wet, and practically without shelter in this raging storm, but they had seen hardships before, and were not dismayed.

Douglas and Russell set to work at once to reconstruct their house. It had grown very dark, but the constant flashes of lightning helped them to see their way as they lashed down the floor, and tied the remaining portions of the roof in place with gun slings and canteen straps. Then the drenched lads crawled back beneath their miserable shelter.

They pulled off their leggins and poured

the mud from their shoes, and hung them with their muddy socks on bamboo stakes to be "automatically" cleansed by rain.

They laid out one of their blankets on the floor, while they wrapped themselves in the other, covered themselves as best they could with the two ponchos, and laid their heads upon the wet haversacks. Their campaign hats partially protected their faces from the rain which poured through the roof, and if the water did not rise to the level of the floor, the chances for a few hours' sleep were favorable.

Within an hour, their mutual warmth had banished the chills, Russell's teeth ceased chattering, and the storm seemed subsiding, for the thunder rolled farther to the north, where the typhoon was now tossing the fragile Filipino barks against the rocky coasts of Luzon.

"If the Lord will but temper the winds to the shorn lamb," said Russell, "I think I will survive till morning."

The sun rose next morning in a cloudless sky, and before eight o'clock the heat was unbearable.

Sergeant Haller and Reddy Fagin had

moved their cooking equipment into one of the shacks, and now handed down breakfast from a hole in the nipa wall to the hungry company as it filed past, barefooted, in six inches of water. Shoes had disappeared, trousers were rolled to the knees, and most of the clothing and equipment was spread out on the roofs of the houses, or hung on bamboo poles to dry.

Eight blistering days followed during which the rice-fields nearly dried, and on the 9th of June, the ——th Infantry marched to San Pedro Macati, where the gallant old Thirteenth had already assembled to participate in the movement of General Lawton's column against a force of some 3,000 Insurgents which had pressed up close to the south lines, and nightly harassed the trenches.

The object of the maneuvre was to envelop the Insurgents' flank, press them back against the sea, and force them to a decisive engagement.

With this object in view, the column moved out toward Guadaloupe Ridge at four o'clock on the memorable morning of June 10th. At eight o'clock the head of the column went

into action, and at nine, the Thirteenth and the ——th Infantry were moving down in a thin line of skirmishers on the enemy's trenches, when one of General Lawton's staff officers galloped up to Major Greene and said:—

"Major, the General directs you to halt your regiment, and move it by the left flank. You are to gain a position on the Insurgent flank, and close them in on the sea. The General hopes you will make a supreme effort to accomplish this result."

"Very well, sir," said the Major, and as the officer galloped away, the ——th Infantry faced to the left, and began its effort to outmarch the fleet-footed Insurgents.

This sudden change in the direction of attack threw M Company at the head of the column, with Douglas Atwell's squad in the lead, and the young Corporal of one week's experience now found himself the most responsible soldier in General Lawton's command.

"Go ahead, Corporal," said Lieutenant Milton, "two regiments are behind you. Everything depends on getting past the Insurgent flank. Set the fastest pace you can stand.

If we succeed we will win a great victory, and the regiment will cover itself with glory."

"I will do my best, sir," said Douglas as he turned into a trail across the Guadaloupe, and mentally resolved to realize the hopes of his superiors if the feat was possible to flesh and blood.

The course lay through the giant grass that towered high above the soldiers' heads and cut off every breath of air like an enveloping blanket. Water was soon exhausted to quench the burning thirst of the men, and canteens could be refilled only from the half dry carabao holes rank with the odor of decaying vegetation, for the storm of the preceding week had fallen but sparingly along the Guadaloupe Ridge. The heat had risen to blistering intensity, and already the men showed signs of great distress.

In vain Sergeant Casey shouted his command, "Kape closed up, kape pace wid Atwell," but the fagged muscles could not respond, and three men lay fainting on the trail.

"Can you stand it, Russell?" asked Douglas, as he glanced over his shoulder at the agonized face behind him.

"I'll make the effort of my life," said Russell as he drained the last drop of water in his canteen, and tore open his shirt to relieve the throbbing of his chest.

For one hour of supreme torture Russell clung tenaciously to the trail, and then he fell in convulsions, and Douglas and Klondyke seized him by the arms as he thrashed in the underbrush in terrible agony.

"Keep up the march! Keep up the march!" came the ringing command from the rear of the company, where Lieutenant Milton was inspiring the men to their greatest effort.

"Fall out, Smith," said Douglas as he quickly resumed his place in ranks, "and take charge of Russell. Bring him on to camp if you can; if not, help him to the hospital," and once more the Corporal led the regiment on through the suffocating trail, dotted all the way to the rear with the bodies of prostrated men.

Again and again he felt his head reel, and the earth seemed heaving beneath him, but he doggedly stuck to his task.

By three o'clock sixty per cent. of the

command had been prostrated, and all were dizzy, haggard, and staggering. Company M was represented by Lieutenant Milton and twenty men, while Douglas and Klondyke were the only members of the squad still upon their feet.

It was clear, however, that the column had encircled the Insurgent flank, and so with nerves keyed up for the struggle, the remnant of the gallant regiment staggered on toward the town on the seacoast whose church spires were now visible through the openings in the bamboo jungle.

The enemy had retired upon that point, and yet not a shot was fired as the skirmish line advanced. Instead, the populace received the regiment with every sign of the submission of a peace-loving community.

"Every house flies a white flag," said Klondyke Jones; "every critter is an 'amigo' (friend). Them 'ere three thousand Insurgents has gone like smoke. We're licked, boys. They've hid their rifles an' uniforms, an' now they're lollin' in the winders smokin' cigarettes as we cum in. I thought

Injuns was treacherous, but them 'ere critters has a corner on th' business thet shuts out all competition."

In utter dejection and discouragement the exhausted men flung themselves upon the bamboo tiendas (fruit stands) which lined the streets, while protected by the white clothing they had assumed, the Insurgents keenly enjoyed the spectacle.

The orders of the Insurgent chieftain had gone forth. The Insurgents were no longer to attempt an organized warfare as a uniformed army, but were to lay aside the marks of their calling when necessary, and under the guise of non-combatant civilians, they were to place themselves under the protection of the American soldiers, or to fight them, as might prove expedient.

In small groups, the men straggled into town all the afternoon, and at eight o'clock Fred Russell and nearly all the rest of the company had passed through the outpost where Corporal Douglas Atwell was in command of the guard.

Clouds had been gathering all the afternoon, and rain was falling heavily when dark-

ness closed down upon the town with its dense Insurgent population.

"Corporal," said Klondyke Jones as he took his post as a member of Douglas Atwell's guard, "I don't like the looks o' things."

"What's the matter, Klondyke?"

"Well, I've seen Injuns preparin' fur treachery, an' I know th' signs. This 'ere town is full o' Insurgent critters to-night, an' we can't stand on ceremony 'bout shootin'. I ain't runnin' this guard, but them thet wants to have a whole skin in th' mornin', better lay awake t' watch it to-night."

Fully appreciating the significance of the "ole sojer's" remarks, Douglas went back to the little tienda which served as a protection for his men when not on duty, ordered magazines filled, and stepped out into the rain, fifty paces in the rear of Klondyke, to watch for indications of danger.

He placed himself astride a rice paddy with his guard in front, and Klondyke on his left, while on his right was the street leading down to the shacks where Company M had gone into quarters.

All was quiet, and in the brilliant flashes of lightning which followed each other in rapid succession, he could see each object with perfect clearness.

An hour had passed since Klondyke went on post, and Douglas was beginning to believe that his anxiety was groundless, when suddenly he became conscious of the near presence of some one. He strained his eyes in the darkness, but he could see nothing but black specks surrounded with red circles which had been floating before his eyes ever since the harrowing march across the Guadaloupe Ridge.

Eagerly he waited for the next flash of light, and when it came he saw a naked Filipino, armed with a bolo, crouching near his feet.

With one terrific blow of his rifle, Douglas knocked the man unconscious, and then stood still, and presently he saw that the street was swarming with natives.

In a moment he was by Klondyke's side, and together they quietly awakened and formed the guard, and crept forward to within fifty paces of the shacks where the men lay, and

where two hundred armed natives were preparing to shoot and stab them as they slept.

"Get your magazines ready," whispered Douglas, "and open fire at the next flash of lightning. Charge when your rifles are empty, and line up in front of the quarters, facing out."

Breathlessly the men waited, and as the lightning revealed a horde of natives surging forward toward their quarters, seven rifles poured a rapid fire into their ranks, and then with a shout, Corporal Douglas Atwell charged down the street with his guard.

"Don't fire," he called, as the startled men jumped up from their sleep, and thrust their rifles through the windows, "the trouble is over."

Twenty natives lay in the street beside the body of the sentinel whom they had murdered, while from the adjacent shacks came the moans of the wounded, but the street was cleared, the plot to assassinate the sleeping men had been frustrated.

"Corporal," said Lieutenant Milton, as he heard the details of the affair, "your watchfulness and devotion to duty have saved the

company to-night. But for you, there would have been few alive to tell the tale."

"I kin guess in one try who'll git th' next sergeantcy in M Company," said Klondyke Jones, as he laid his hand on Douglas Atwell's shoulder, and walked back to his post in the drenching rain.

CHAPTER XIX

THROUGH THE INSURGENT LINES TO SAN FABIAN

Mail had arrived from the States, mail for the first time in a month, and the nipa barracks in Manila, where the ——th Infantry was quartered, was a scene of activity and excitement.

The regiment had just marched in after a short but brilliant expedition in Cavite, and now it was under orders to prepare for the final great campaign against Aguinaldo.

The comparatively cool days of October had come, the rainy season was but a memory, and something of the old time spirit pervaded the ranks.

Douglas Atwell and his comrades were hauling sacks of mail from the adjutant's office, and dumping their contents on the floor, while Fred Russell sorted and distributed the welcome letters.

"Stick that candle on the end of a bayonet,

Klondyke," said Douglas, "and help us sort the papers."

"All right, Sergeant Atwell," said the "ole sojer," for such was now the rank of our young friend.

The hardships of the rainy season had incapacitated many and had produced numerous changes in the non-commissioned personnel, and Douglas Atwell now found himself the junior sergeant of the company, while the fate of the squad rested in the hands of Corporal Fred Russell, a mere shadow of the old-time lad on the college baseball team, but yet full of the hardy, jovial spirit which conquers.

Douglas had received his commission as sergeant only a few days before, when Lieutenant Milton handed him the precious document with the words:—"That is in recognition of your services on the night of the 10th of June, when you saved the company from a great disaster. You are probably the youngest man who ever held the rank in this company, but I know you will sustain the dignity of your office."

Corporal Fred Russell felt more pride in his

new chevrons than in his diploma from the university, and talked enthusiastically of his "squad."

Philip Kelton was back in his old place, a deep scar from chin to ear bearing mute witness to the Moro's prowess, and Skaguay McFadden was once more beside the "ole sojer."

A recruit, a blundering, awkward, young Norwegian, had been assigned to the place left vacant by the peerless Bill Smathers.

"And Jackson is the only absentee from my squad," said Corporal Russell, as he and Douglas stood together after reading their mail. "I hear that his efforts to secure a discharge by favor of the Secretary of War have failed, and that he is to be returned to duty."

"Ho-ho, what is this 'ere?" chuckled Klondyke, as he slapped his knee and held up a San Francisco paper to the light of a candle.

"What is it, Klondyke?" asked Douglas.

"Jackson, by gum, as a sojer o' th' Republic," answered Klondyke. "He ain't with yer squad, Russell, but here he is in the 'Frisco paper—a full length picture o' 'Fightin' Leel Jackson,' with a column o' eloquence 'bout his valiant services at the battle o'

Quingua, where, says the paper, 'he justified th' confidence an' esteem o' his many friends by stickin' t' th' fight agin terrible odds even after he had suffered a painful wound.'"

The company roared with laughter as Klondyke read aloud the long narrative of Jackson's virtues, interpolating the story with his own humorous remarks, and grunting over the hard words.

While Klondyke was still struggling bravely with "them 'ere consarned skyrocketty words," the company clerk entered, and said to Douglas, "Sergeant Atwell, Lieutenant Milton wants to see you, right away, at his quarters."

Douglas started, for Jackson was in his thoughts.

"Th' sick man o' Corregidor," however, had not inspired a new calamity, but yet a very unpleasant message awaited Douglas nevertheless.

"Sergeant," said Lieutenant Milton, "I have received an order placing you on detached service, and you are to report for duty tomorrow morning at nine o'clock at General Lawton's headquarters in Manila."

"And not go out with the regiment, sir?" asked Douglas in alarm.

"I am afraid not," said Lieutenant Milton. "I have no official information, but I know there has been a vigorous search for competent clerks, and I suppose they have observed your excellent penmanship on the company muster rolls, and propose to use you, or they may want you for topographical work."

"Is there no hope of getting out with the company, sir?" said Douglas anxiously.

"There is nothing to do but to obey the order," said Lieutenant Milton. "I regret to lose you, but there is no alternative."

Douglas had been long enough in the service to recognize the impropriety of further remark, and saluting, he returned to barracks, where the men heard, with genuine regret, that he must part with the company to become a clerk.

Promptly at nine o'clock the next morning, however, Douglas entered General Lawton's headquarters, and by one of those fortunate blunders which sometimes make a career, he walked into General Lawton's office instead of that of his assistant.

The General turned an enquiring glance toward the youthful Sergeant as he entered.

"Sergeant Douglas Atwell, Company M, ——th Infantry, reports to General Lawton for duty, sir," said Douglas as he saluted.

"What duty?" asked the General.

"I don't know, sir."

The General smiled slightly. "Well, what can you do? What is your specialty?"

"I have made some maps, sir," confessed Douglas regretfully, as visions of stuffy rooms, and endless piles of drawing material passed before his mind's eye.

"Maps," said the General with a show of interest, "what kind of maps?"

Douglas explained the work he had done under Lieutenant Milton's supervision.

"Have you any of those maps with you?"

"Yes, sir," said Douglas, as he drew from his blouse pocket a number of copies, and as luck would have it, the first map that met the General's eye, covered the section about Cabanatuan on the Rio Grande de Pampanga.

"Have you maps covering the country to the north as far as San Fabian?"

"Yes, sir."

Douglas waited breathlessly as the General examined one of the maps.

"You are the man," said the General, "who made that sketch of the Insurgent trenches from a tree-top in front of Caloocan. Well, they wanted you, no doubt, as a clerk here at headquarters, but you will come with me. My troops will need the information furnished by your maps, and you can be of great assistance. Climb into the ambulance in the street below, and tell the driver you are to go with me to San Fernando. The train leaves in a few minutes."

Thus it happened that Sergeant Douglas Atwell escaped the monotonous duties of a bureau clerk, and came under the personal notice of that gallant General whose deeds had won the admiration of the whole American army.

As the train rolled out that morning for San Fernando with General Lawton on board, a youthful Sergeant on the train joyously watched the iron-roofed houses fade in the distance. He had lost his company, but he was to take the field with troops whose duty

it would be to close the avenues of escape to Aguinaldo, and Sergeant Atwell thrilled with delight at the prospect.

He was conscious of the very unusual character of his present position—that of a soldier detailed to assist his superiors with maps which he himself had constructed. In this work, he had been, however, only the assistant of Lieutenant Milton, who had foreseen the needs of the campaign, and had constructed from all existing Spanish maps, and every other available source of information, the best and largest outline of the proposed theatre of operations which could be found in Manila.

In Douglas he found a natural topographical expert, who, not content to merely complete his official task, had also made copies of these maps for his own information and guidance. It was the possession of these private copies which now saved him from the obscurity of a clerkship at headquarters, and sent him to the centre of activity of the American army.

Pursuant to the orders of his new chief, Douglas reported that very night at Arayat to

Lieutenant Batson, who commanded the Macabebe scouts.

"We march at midnight in the direction of San Isidro," said Lieutenant Batson, as he examined the map which Sergeant Atwell handed him. "You'd better get some sleep and be ready to go with us. Your maps will help us very much indeed."

But Douglas could not sleep, for the new field in which he suddenly found himself was full of thrilling interest.

The great advance to the north was at last on foot, and he was to participate. General Young was in command of the cavalry with their powerful American horses, looking giant-like beside the native ponies of Luzon, and a force new to Douglas was in the field—the Macabebe scouts.

"These little chaps have shown what they can do in the swamps around Malolos," said a cavalry Sergeant who was assigned to the command, as he and Douglas sat together and whiled away the hours to midnight. "You know," continued the cavalryman, "there is an enmity between the Tagalos and the Macabebes, which grows hotter as time runs on.

As soon as the American columns had advanced to the Macabebe country, the little chaps came out like game cocks for the American cause, and asked to be armed and lead against the Tagalos, and here they are."

That night as Sergeant Douglas Atwell rode along through the impenetrable darkness, beside his new commanding officer, he soon realized the wisdom of the decision to send the Macabebes against their old-time enemy. With a tread that scarcely broke the silence of the night the dark column was stealthily picking its way toward the Tagalo outposts.

From his headquarters at Tarlac, Aguinaldo had already recognized the inevitable, and was preparing to retire gracefully behind the following order:—

"In view of the fact that Tarlac does not possess the hygienic and geographic conditions befitting it for the numerous population of the capital of the Republic of the Philippines, the honorable president of the Republic, and his council of government, has been pleased to order that the capital of the Republic be moved provisionally to Bayoubong, the capital of Nueva Vizcaya."

The end was at hand.

General MacArthur lay at San Fernando waiting the signal to advance; General Lawton was already dashing past the Insurgent flank and closing the lower passes which might serve as avenues of escape; while other troops under General Wheaton, and among them Douglas's regiment, were boarding transports at Manila to proceed by sea to the Gulf of Lingayen, fall upon the Insurgent rear near San Fabian, and complete the net about the Insurgent army, by a rapid advance to meet the troops of General Lawton.

All parts of the command moved simultaneously on the 5th of November.

From Mexico, through San Fernando to Cabanatuan, the rifles roared from dawn till evening. No separate combat differed materially from any other, but darkness fell upon miles and miles of ruined Insurgent trenches, and the fields were dotted with the unattended dead.

Sergeant Douglas Atwell had spent the day with the Third Cavalry, and as a trooper in its ranks, he had swept across the fields in a

furious charge, his heart leaping to the thunder of the hoof beats.

And now he lay upon his back near the picket line and watched the moon drifting across the sky toward the Yellow Sea where a transport bearing the ——th Infantry was breasting the waves toward the Gulf of Lingayen.

"Poor Atwell," said Klondyke Jones, as he and Fred Russell leaned upon the rail and gazed out toward the black mountain heads which rose precipitously from the coast line, "thet 'ere 's a shame t' tether a fine little sojer like him t' a desk in Manila right in th' heart o' th' campaign. I'll bet his heart is breakin' t' be with th' boys. Th' 'll be some fine fightin' too," continued Klondyke. "In less than twenty-four hours we'll drop down on th' Insurgents' rear, an' if Aguinaldo ain't a' ready on th' jump fur high timber, he'll have ole Klondyke Jones & Co. t' fight in gittin' thar."

But the wary Aguinaldo was already on the retreat and all Luzon was awake and anxious.

Down in the valleys which led north from Tarlac, a bull-train laden with $75,000 in

Mexican coin, the treasure of the Insurgent Government, was ploughing along the roads under the lash of frightened drivers, while the Insurgent army was falling back on Bamban in great disorder. But, forcing their way across the river, a small detachment of American troops fell upon the exposed flank of the Insurgent line, which rolled up and crushed like so much glass before a battering-ram, and the retreat became a panic.

Down they flung the Bamban bridge and over the broken trestle they drove the trains, vainly hoping, if but for a little time, to arrest the harrowing advance. But scarcely had the trains ceased to crash in the river, when the advance guard of General MacArthur's column was clambering over the wreckage.

General Lawton's headquarters, far up on the Insurgent flank, was in a ferment of excitement when the news of these victories flashed along the wires from Manila.

Seated at a little table in a shack which had been converted into a telegraph office, Sergeant Douglas Atwell was working rapidly on a number of copies of maps for the organi-

zations which would march at the first break of dawn.

The operator bent over his key, with an expression of growing interest.

"Good," he exclaimed as the instrument ceased to tick. "The ——th Infantry and the Thirty-third Volunteers have landed in the gulf of Lingayen. The Insurgents have been thrashed at San Jacinto, and General Wheaton's troops are on the hills to meet us. We'll get Aguinaldo sure," and the excited operator dashed off with the message to General Lawton.

A mighty cheer rose from the shacks where the men lay when the news reached them, and the belief that Aguinaldo would be captured was expressed on every hand.

Excitement rose to fever heat. One great effort more and every pass for escape of the fugitive chieftain would be closed.

For eight days Sergeant Douglas Atwell had been in the saddle, now with the cavalry, now the Macabebes, or Major Ballance's incomparable infantry, everywhere giving the invaluable assistance of his maps, and revelling in the glories of this whirlwind campaign.

And now on the morning of the 13th of November he was hurrying forward with a troop of the Third Cavalry, at the very head of the column, while Captain Dodds was sweeping on in pursuit of Aguinaldo's booty train.

"Never have American troops conquered greater difficulties," said General Young as he swung from his saddle that night, "never have they behaved more creditably. If our advanced troop can form a connecting link with General Wheaton to-night, our chances for capturing Aguinaldo are excellent."

Even as the General spoke, the leading troop, with Sergeant Douglas Atwell among them, was riding into Binalonan, where a deputation from the town welcomed the troops with music and rejoicing.

"Has Aguinaldo escaped?" was the troop commander's first eager question.

"No," said the natives, "but the road is still open, for General Wheaton's troops have not advanced to Binalonan."

"Let me see your map, Sergeant Atwell," said the Captain, and then after a few moments' study, he called the First Sergeant of the troop. "Select twelve of the best men and

horses, Sergeant," said he, "and have them ready to mount without delay. Sergeant Atwell will ride with the detachment," continued the Captain, "and they will feel out for General Wheaton's troops and ride till they find them."

Once more the saddles were flung on the backs of the sore and tired mounts, cinches were made tight, and Sergeant Douglas Atwell with twelve stained and sunburned troopers, trotted down the streets of Binalonan, followed by the cheers of their comrades, and rode out into the heart of the enemy's country.

All available information led to the belief that Aguinaldo was still within, and as the little band rode forward toward the only gap that still lay open, they believed it possible to encounter the Insurgent Chieftain with all the troops he could muster, making a desperate effort to escape, and nerves were tingling with excitement.

No indications of the enemy's presence were observed and the little detachment rode on and on.

Darkness was rapidly falling about them as

they passed through Manaoag, but no friendly American outpost awaited their approach. They were now beyond the help of comrades from Binalonan, and in the heart of a country peopled by 50,000 semi-hostile natives, while at any moment, they thought, they might find themselves in the midst of Aguinaldo's retreating column.

Magazines were loaded and each trooper rode in silence, with his hand on the butt of his carbine.

In complete darkness they stole through San Jacinto where the natives came stealthily to the windows and watched them pass, and here the road branched.

"Which way to Dagupan, Atwell?" said the Sergeant in command.

"The road to the left," replied Douglas.

The Sergeant faced his men.

"We're not strong enough to stand and fight," said he in a low tone. "If we are attacked in force we've got to retreat, but each man must remember that it's his business to get through if possible and reach General Wheaton."

Then the Sergeant led the way along the

dark road toward Dagupan. A half hour later he drew off into a rice-field and ordered his men to dismount.

"According to our information," said he, "General Wheaton must be in Dagupan, but if he is not, it would be fatal to ride in there in the darkness. How does the land lie in front, Atwell?"

"The roads branched at San Jacinto, as you saw," said Douglas. "This road runs to Magaldan about three miles, and then goes on to Dagupan, about seven miles. The other branch runs to San Fabian. It doesn't seem possible to me that General Wheaton's men are at Dagupan," continued Douglas, "for that would leave all the roads open for the escape of the Insurgents. In spite of the reports, I believe he is at San Fabian."

The men were sitting on rice paddies holding the reins of their drooping horses, when a crashing volley sounded from the roadside which they had left, and the bullets tore through the trees about them.

"Smash through them," shouted the Sergeant, as the troopers leaped into their saddles and drove their spurs into their horses' flanks.

Away through the bamboo the detachment thundered, seeking every available opening, and in a moment the men had become separated and Douglas found himself with two troopers riding breathlessly for a place on the road.

Suddenly his horse mired, and the three horses and riders rolled headlong in the swamp. The exhausted animals floundered and snorted in the mud, and when they were finally extricated, the firing had ceased, and the sounds of the running horses could be heard no more.

It was impossible to know whether the rest of the detachment had escaped or had been captured, but the business of the moment was to get away, and very promptly.

"What are we going to do, Sergeant Atwell?" asked one of the men.

"Make for San Fabian," replied Douglas, as he drew his horse up on firmer ground, and forced his way through the bamboo.

A bamboo fence crossed their path, but the horses were trained to jump and all safely cleared it, and landed in the road.

For five minutes they sped along it, and

then Douglas saw that his calculations had been correct. The road led into the principal highway from San Jacinto to San Fabian.

But were the American troops at San Fabian? If not, the capture of the three riders was practically certain.

"We're safe from that pack behind, anyway," said Douglas as he tightened his reins, "and it would be good policy to go slow now. We're not sure what's in front."

The open rice-fields were visible on either side, and all was bathed in the soft, silvery light of the moon. The scattered houses along the road were abandoned except by the hungry dogs that howled about them like a pack of coyotes.

No sign of life was visible as Douglas rode in front of his two anxious companions into the outskirts of San Fabian, but a voice that made them jump in their saddles roared out from the shadows: —

"Halt! Who's thar?"

"Friends," said Douglas.

"Dismount! Advance one t' be reco'-nized."

The three swung from their saddles, and

handing his reins to one of his comrades, Douglas moved forward.

The sentinel stepped cautiously toward him, peering over the point of his glittering bayonet which he kept pointed straight at Douglas Atwell's chest.

"Hello, Klondyke. How are you?" said Douglas, as he burst out laughing.

"Atwell, by gum," roared the "ole sojer" as he joyfully grasped Douglas by the hand. "Ain't I glad t' see ye, lad," chuckled Klondyke, "but how on airth did ye git here? I thought ye wuz a-clerkin' it."

"Maps, Klondyke, maps," said Douglas laughing. "General Lawton sent me up the line and here I am. We've broken through from the south, and it is dollars to doughnuts that Aguinaldo's inside the net."

"Is that Douglas Atwell?" said Corporal Russell, as he jumped to his feet and rushed out to meet him.

The members of the guard were now awake and crowding about in great delight at the gallant boy's return and the news he brought. They anxiously plied him with questions as to the fight on the road, and commended

his courage for the plucky ride he had made.

Only one soldier at the outpost lay upon his bamboo rack and took no part in the friendly greeting.

"Who is it?" asked Douglas as he glanced at the silent form rolled up in a blanket.

"Jackson," said Klondyke. "Him and Reiter come up t'-day on a transport carryin' convalescents."

There was a momentary silence and Douglas drew a long breath.

"Can you take care of the two men who are with me, Russell?" he asked finally.

"We certainly can, and will give them something to eat into the bargain."

"All right," said Douglas. "I'll go in and report to General Wheaton."

CHAPTER XX

VICENTE PRADO "SURRENDERS" AT DAGUPAN

AGUINALDO had escaped.

Despite the gallant ride of Douglas Atwell and his comrades, information of General Lawton's advance from the south came too late, for the wily Insurgent had already slipped through a mountain pass during the night, and General Young was now pursuing him with dogged but fruitless persistence.

The Insurgents which the little detachment encountered while searching for General Wheaton proved to be merely a broken fragment of the Insurgent army which was making its way to a place of safety. All the members of the detachment escaped uninjured, for the Sergeant and his nine men crushed through the Insurgent line and rejoined the American column at Pozorrubio, where he reported the "loss of Sergeant Douglas Atwell and two privates, killed or captured."

All organized resistance had now disap-

peared. In five brief days, the Insurgent power had been crushed. In two weeks the columns had reunited, and a distribution of troops to hold the conquered territory had begun.

"The natives have petitioned the presence of American troops in Dagupan," said General Wheaton, as he discussed the situation with the commanding officer of the ——th Infantry, "and I have concluded to grant their request. Please designate one of your battalions for this duty, and send it out in the morning."

"I will send the Third Battalion," said the regimental commander, and pursuant to this arrangement, the column set out early the next morning for its new station.

The command had been considerably strengthened by the return of convalescents from the hospitals, and among these were Jackson and Reiter, who now marched in their old places in M Company.

Reiter's unexpected return was greeted on all sides with expressions of congratulation and esteem, while Jackson was ignored even by those formerly most near to him.

It will be remembered that Reiter was one of the college boys who fell in the desperate charge on blockhouse No. 14, and after he had been carried to the hospital, grave reports as to his condition came back to his comrades on the line, and for a time his death was momentarily expected.

"When he began to recover," said Fred Russell, as he and Douglas swung along the road together, "he persistently refused to be sent home, and asked only the privilege of serving out the campaign with his comrades in arms. He is a fine, courageous, whole-souled lad who certainly would have won distinction had he not been shot down in the very first engagement."

While searching for the wounded on that memorable day, Douglas Atwell and Klondyke Jones had found Reiter upon the field, had dressed his wound, and a few moments later, Douglas had stumbled upon Jackson hiding behind a clump of bamboo. And by thus revealing Jackson's cowardice, he had awakened an enmity which each day grew more bitter and dangerous.

Now, thoroughly frightened and shocked at

the results of his intrigues, Jackson was now more than willing to abandon a struggle which had so nearly cost him his life, and all might have gone well had it not been for one of those unfortunate incidents which turn the currents of life awry, and wreck the best made resolutions.

It came about in the most unexpected manner. The company had gone into quarters at the native college building in Dagupan, and the men were gathered in front of quarters in the evening, merrily exchanging their jokes, and discussing the campaign which had been terminated, when Reiter coughed violently and raised his hand to his chest.

"Do you still suffer from the wound in your chest?" asked Douglas.

"Yes," said Reiter, "one of my lungs was punctured, and I have been barking ever since."

"Chist!" said Sergeant Casey, "wuz ye wounded in th' chist, Reiter?"

"I was," said Reiter.

Sergeant Casey stood up and faced the young man, and his freckled face assumed an expression of intense earnestness.

"An' ye wuz not hit through th' hips?" he demanded.

"No, the chest was good enough. Why? What is the point?"

Sergeant Casey ignored the question, but struggled with restrained emotion.

"And didn't yer frind, Jackson, rush t' ye on th' field, an' stay wid ye, an' kape ye from bleedin' t' death?"

"No. I didn't even see Jackson on the field," said Reiter.

"An' who wuz th' first person t' rache ye, an' tind t' yer wounds?" said Sergeant Casey as his voice rose in excitement.

"Good old Klondyke Jones, and Sergeant Atwell here. No one else touched me till the hospital corps men picked me up."

"Jackson," cried the Sergeant, "why did ye tell me ye wuz tindin' Reiter whin I axed ye t' explain yer absince from me squad th' day we fought ferninst blockhouse No. 14?"

"What!" exclaimed Jackson in well assumed astonishment.

"Ye heard me. Give an answer," commanded the Sergeant.

"I told you nothing of the sort," said Jackson sneeringly.

"Be th' powers!" cried the Sergeant with rising anger, "d'ye mane t' tell me ye never said it?"

"I do. Don't make an exhibition of yourself, Sergeant. You've had a little too much bino."

"Atwell, ye were there—yerself an' Klondyke Jones,—drinkin' coffee beside Reddy Fagin's car-rt. Did ye hear what Jackson said?"

Douglas hesitated, but fairness demanded that the Sergeant should not be denied and humiliated to protect Jackson, no matter what might be the consequences.

"I heard—I couldn't help hearing," said Douglas.

"An' did Jackson say he had been tindin' Reiter, an' fur that raison had absinted himself from me squad?"

"He did," said Douglas.

"You sneaked and listened, you miserable country lout!" screamed Jackson as he rushed upon Douglas and struck him squarely in the face.

Douglas responded with all the strength of his country-bred muscles of steel, and it is certain that Jackson would have received a terrible thrashing had it not been for the fact that at this precise moment Lieutenant Milton passed through the gate of the iron enclosure, and stepped between the two infuriated boys.

"What is the matter?" he demanded.

Sergeant Casey at once responded and explained the situation in brief but forcible terms, while the whole group corroborated his statements.

"Go to your quarters in arrest, Jackson," said the Lieutenant, after he had satisfied himself as to the soldier's conduct, and had drawn from Klondyke Jones and Douglas Atwell, a statement as to the occurrences on the field on the 5th of February, when they were sent to search for wounded.

Thus the affair between Douglas and Jackson behind the bamboo-trees in front of blockhouse No. 14 was made public before the entire company, and loud spoken expressions of contempt for Jackson were heard on every side.

Heretofore his conduct on that day had

merely excited suspicion, but now Jackson was flatly accused of cowardice and falsehood, and the indignant company hoped to see him punished before a military court.

Lieutenant Milton, however, knew the futility of bringing him before a general court-martial on a charge of cowardice, as a defense of heat prostration could not be readily overthrown, for one case of actual and serious heat prostration had occurred during the engagement. It was necessary, therefore, to leave that charge to be tried in the court of company opinion, and to punish Jackson for the offense of striking a non-commissioned officer without just cause or provocation.

The case was tried before a summary court, consisting of a single commissioned officer, and the next night at parade, Private Leland C. Jackson, Company M, ——th Infantry, was sentenced "to forfeit one month's pay to the United States, and to be confined at hard labor, under charge of the post-guard, for a period of ten days."

Immediately after parade he was escorted to the guard-house by Sergeant Casey, and for ten never-to-be-forgotten days he was marched

about Dagupan to the humiliating duties of a prisoner, under charge of an armed sentinel, and as if to intensify the bitterness of this cup of misery, on the last day of his incarceration it happened that Sergeant Douglas Atwell and Corporal Fred Russell were the non-commissioned officers of the guard.

During these ten terrible days, Jackson had resolved again and again to desert, steal aboard some ship in the harbor, and escape to the United States or elsewhere, but there was the danger of capture and punishment as a deserter, without the consolation of revenge, and Jackson finally resolved to remain.

On the morning of the tenth day he was released from confinement, and as he passed battalion headquarters, Sergeant Douglas Atwell mounted the steps of the same building with the new Sergeant of the guard, to report with his guard-book to the Adjutant and Provost Marshal.

Jackson glanced up at the window as he passed and saw a native standing before the commanding officer, and the next moment his heart stood still, for sitting in this native's carromato in the side street was Col.

Quicoy Siongco. The chino was dressed in white, and nervously awaited the return of his comrade, who stood talking to the commanding officer at battalion headquarters.

As Sergeant Atwell stood in front of the Provost Marshal's desk, his eyes rested upon the native visitor, and he noted every line and feature of his vicious, malevolent face.

This native was Vicente Prado, a general in the Insurgent army, and ex-Insurgent Governor of the Province of Pangasinan of which Dagupan was the capital.

Moreover, he was a "Jefe Principal," or chief, of the Katipunan Society, an organization whose powers for evil had been but vaguely realized by the officers of the American army.

This society was alleged to have its headquarters at Hongkong, with branch offices in Paris and Madrid, a working base of operations in Manila, and active sub-stations in every little hamlet in the Philippines.

In each town the society was organized into a community at the head of which was the "Jefe Principal," or chief. Each member was styled "a Son of the Pueblo (town)," and

the symbol of the society was branded on his flesh with red-hot irons.

With a knife held at his throat, and a loaded pistol held at his mouth, the initiate swore to blindly receive, transmit and obey all orders from the chiefs of the Katipunan Society, to denounce all persons thought by him to be inimical to the interests of the society, irrespective of race, sex, or relationship.

The execution of the death penalty for ten loosely defined offenses was placed in the hands of the "Jefe Principal" or chief, and among the most powerful of the chiefs of the Katipunan Society was Vicente Prado, who now stood before the commanding officer at Dagupan.

"I have come to surrender myself to my comandante," said Prado, bowing profoundly, and speaking in excellent Spanish.

"Please be seated, Señor Prado," said the commanding officer, with easy courtesy. "I am delighted to receive your surrender, and I trust that you will influence others in following the same course."

"It will give me the most profound pleasure," said Prado with unctuous sweet-

ness. "I am a peace-loving man, and my poor heart aches with pain at the spectacle of this cruel strife. I weep, my comandante, and yearn for the day when my poor countrymen will be at peace beneath your flag. I have held no military rank, Señor," continued Prado. "I have been only civil governor of the Province of Pangasinan, but now my resolution is taken to lay my submission at your feet, and I beg to know, my comandante, what 'terms' the generous American Government will offer an humble repentant, such as I."

"Terms?" said the commanding officer. "Why, we hold absolutely nothing against you. You are as free as the freest citizen of my country. Have no fear of arrest, or confinement. We do not wish to punish; we wish only the peace and prosperity of this country. Go among the Insurgents and use your influence to terminate the war, and not only will my government not punish those who surrender, but it will pay for every rifle turned in."

"If I could but go before my people with some 'terms,' some generous offer," said Prado, hesitatingly.

"I can only say that the American Government practically absolves all political offenders, and punishes crime wherever it is found," and then the commanding officer insinuated that however much the American Government might desire peace in the Philippines, it was not purchasing that blessing on a cash basis.

Sergeant Douglas Atwell watched the Katipunan chieftain as he sat upon the edge of a chair, and eagerly bent forward as if anxious to catch every precious word of pardon and conciliation that fell from the commanding officer's lips. His bristling mustaches stood out above a long line of yellow teeth, and his eyebrows ran spasmodically up and down as he servilely crooned acquiescence in all that the commanding officer said, and then Prado rose.

"I am profoundly impressed with what you have said, my comandante. I am overwhelmed with admiration and love for the exalted sentiments which you so kindly express to one so humble as I, and I pledge myself without hesitation to the service of the great American Government."

And then the branded chieftain of the

Katipunan Society slowly bowed himself from the room.

The Provost Marshal, who had suspended his work to listen to this interesting "repentant," now finished his task, and Sergeant Douglas Atwell returned to barracks.

Jackson was there, lying on his bunk, his eyes fixed upon the ceiling, and a peculiar expression of gratification played over his handsome features.

That night Vincente Prado and Col. Quicoy Siongco held a meeting at the house of a trusted member of the town council, and it was decided to reorganize the shattered fragments of the Insurgent forces, for the American Government must be taught the market value of peace in the old domain of Vicente Prado, where, for nearly two years, murder had been the unpunishable privilege of him who commanded the greatest number of rifles. Again Prado would rule, not openly and defiantly, but secretly, by a force which held millions of souls in a thraldom of silence and slavery—the Katipunan Society.

In an obscure corner known as Inlombo, within the jurisdiction of San Fabian, Vicente

Prado called his old cohorts together. The ranks were sadly depleted, but fifty-nine rifles responded, and were placed under the command of Inocencio Prado, Vicente's coachman in the days of his ascendancy, while an indefinite number of bolomen were placed under the command of Juan Magaldan, already an assassin of great renown.

Col. Quicoy Siongco controlled none of the troops of Vicente Prado, and his presence in Dagupan with the Katipunan chieftain was more or less accidental. Before the conquering march of the American army, his guerrillas had gradually disappeared, and he was now casting about to find an opportunity for surrender on a "generous financial basis."

He had met Vicente Prado when he passed through the Igorrote country, and impressed Batang and many of his associates into the ranks of the Insurgent army, and he and Prado would operate together and remain friends so long as they found it mutually expedient.

But the peace-loving-people of Pangasinan who had received the American troops with cheers and petitions to garrison their towns,

were weary of war and resentful of Insurgent control, and they contributed but grudgingly to the "army" that loitered in Inlombo.

Prado was outraged at the ingratitude of his countrymen. "They are all 'Americanistas,'" he said, "and they must be taught to respect my authority."

His armed force went forth, not to fight American troops, but to prey upon the people and compel them to contribute to its support.

Dressed as common citizens, as day laborers, no marks betrayed their calling.

The escorts from Dagupan met them every day in the public roads, but to the Americans they were the peaceful non-combatants whose rights were inviolable.

Three months had passed, and all Pangasinan was torn with internal anarchy. Men were killed as chickens, but as yet only low mutterings of an indefinite dread were heard by the American officers, and the troops at Dagupan heard least of all, for they were beyond the theatre of Prado's operations, and soldiering was gradually assuming the character of slain garrison duty.

Douglas Atwell had been appointed acting company quartermaster sergeant in the place of Sergeant Haller, who had returned to the States in broken health, while Sergeant Casey was now First Sergeant of the company in place of Sergeant Crimmins, who had never recovered from the wounds received on February 5th and had died in the hospital in San Francisco.

Babong had left the company, and after bidding a tearful good-bye to Douglas, Russell, and Reddy Fagin, he had returned to his home in the Igorrote hills, fifteen miles from Dagupan, and Sergeant Atwell and Reddy Fagin now struggled with the problem of satisfying the ravenous appetites of Company M. Sergeant Casey helped his young assistant in this duty, for Douglas' services were also needed for escorting rations to the outlying stations of the regiment, which kept the non-commissioned officers on constant duty.

In his new office Douglas was now responsible for the security of all the company property, including the rifles of men absent from the company. These he kept locked in a

storeroom beneath the barracks, and never permitted the keys to leave his possession.

Douglas was about to retire one night in February—a year after the outbreak of hostilities—and he was carefully attaching the precious keys to a belt he wore about his waist, when Corporal Russell rushed into barracks and hurried to his bunk.

"Get your revolver, quick," he panted, "and come with me."

Douglas asked no questions, but obeyed, and followed Russell as he ran down the principal street of Dagupan, and halted with an exclamation of disappointment in front of one of the large buildings.

"What was it?" whispered Douglas.

"Quicoy Siongco," said Russell; "Quicoy Siongco and Jackson. I saw them through the shutters of Victoriano Quemada's house. They were sitting at a table and talking."

The house was now shrouded in darkness, and experience had taught the uselessness of a search. Siongco was elsewhere.

"Are you sure you saw them?" asked Douglas.

"I couldn't swear to it," said Russell.

"Come back to barracks," said Douglas, as they hurried back up the street, "and we will see where Jackson is."

Jackson was beside his cot preparing to retire when the two young men entered the squad room.

CHAPTER XXI

CAPTURED

It was morally certain that Jackson had met Col. Quicoy Siongco at the house of Victoriano Quemada, but there was just that element of uncertainty about the case which restrained Fred Russell and Douglas Atwell from reporting the case to Lieutenant Milton.

If Jackson had been with Quicoy Siongco, he had left not a moment too soon to evade arrest at the hands of the two young soldiers, for they had mutually agreed that the time for conciliation and restraint had passed, and that if Jackson again committed himself, they would force him to suffer the natural consequences of his acts. But fortune had once more favored Jackson, or timely warning had reached him, and he was still in a position to defy his accusers if they attempted to arraign him on the charge. A month had passed since the occurrence of this event, when Douglas Atwell made a startling discovery.

"Russell," said he, as he hurried into the squad room, and drew aside his good friend and counselor, "I have just heard through the Sergeant-Major at headquarters that Victoriano Quemada's son is an officer in the Insurgent army. The house was searched last night by the adjutant, and letters were captured which showed that young Quemada served as a major in Quicoy Siongco's regiment of guerrillas."

"Did they find anything to incriminate Jackson?" asked Russell eagerly.

"Nothing so far as I could learn, though I could not ask directly," said Douglas; "but we already know Jackson's relations with Quicoy Siongco, and this discovery connects the Chino directly with Victoriano Quemado and his family. Russell," he went on with rising emotion, "we have been harboring and petting this den of wolves in our very midst. Old Victoriano Quemada has been considered one of the most friendly and trustworthy natives in the town; he has come and gone among us at will, and it is astonishing that some tragedy has not already occurred. And that bloodthirsty Moro must be somewhere

in the vicinity, and any night he might slip into barracks with his kampilan and kill a dozen men before we could discover what was going on."

"Well, the question is," said Russell, "have we any right to subject the garrison to possible danger by still withholding what we know concerning Jackson's interview with Quicoy Siongco at Victoriano's house?"

The two young men were still sitting together earnestly discussing this question when First Sergeant Casey appeared in the door.

"Sergeant Atwell," said he sharply, "d'ye not know thit th' bull train is waitin' fur ye beyant this half hour?"

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Douglas, as he jumped to his feet and seized his equipment, "I forgot I was for duty to-day."

"Forgot, did ye," said Sergeant Casey, "them thit wears th' chivrons av a sergeant in this company don't forget. Were ye slapin' or wakin' whin I read out th' arthers last night?"

"I heard the orders, Sergeant," said Doug-

las, "but something happened this morning which made me forget."

"Well," said Sergeant Casey, in a milder tone, "don't let a saison's grass grow undther yer feet in gettin' t' yer post av jooty," and with these sharp words ringing in his ears, Douglas hurried down-stairs where the long line of bull-carts was standing loaded and ready to start.

Distracted and confused by his unintentional neglect of duty Douglas set the train in motion while the all-important question concerning the disposition of Jackson's case still remained undecided.

Up to this moment, Quicoy Siongco had not made his presence felt in Dagupan, and the horizon was free from the slightest suggestion of a war cloud. Although the whole native population lived in mortal terror of Vicente Prado and his soldiers, yet the troops at Dagupan were in ignorance of his existence, and it was not known that Vicente Prado and Quicoy Siongco were fellow conspirators in the little revolution which was raging beneath the surface in the province of Pangasinan.

In ignorance of the dangers which lurked in the road, the bull train pulled slowly along on its long journey.

Dagupan, the northern terminus of the railroad, was the distributing point for all provisions which were needed for the regiment. The rainy season was again approaching and all the stations from Dagupan to San Manuel must be retained to provide for three months' isolation from the base of supplies. Rations must be transported from Dagupan by pack-mule and bull-cart train.

On the day in question, the train was bound for Binalonan, and was under orders to return the next day, and Sergeant Douglas Atwell was in command of the escort. Jackson was to have been a member of the escort, but the illness of some of the men made it necessary to change the detail at the last moment, and Jackson was ordered to hold himself in readiness for guard duty in the place of a man who had gone to the hospital.

Jackson's petulant protest was met by a stern rebuke from Sergeant Casey, and remembering his ten days' experience as a prisoner in the guard-house, Jackson con-

trolled his tongue, and sullenly watched the escort leave.

Guard duty would hold him at Dagupan for twenty-four hours, and for some unaccountable reason he sought the more disagreeable duty of escorting the ration train.

Sergeant Atwell arrived at Binalonan after a hard but uneventful march, under a sun that seemed to drive its heat rays through him like streams of hot liquid.

The escort rested all night with regimental comrades at Binalonan, and early the next morning the empty carts set out for Dagupan on the return trip.

A halt was made at Manaoag, and the men sat chatting freely with the members of the garrison. Sergeant Atwell had noticed a young native standing about and watching the soldiers with an interest which seemed unusual. Douglas approached him and spoke in a friendly tone, and the boy eagerly seized upon the opportunity to talk, and after a few meaningless remarks, he said :

" Este—este, Señor Dooglas Atwell—aqui ? "
(Is Mr. Douglas Atwell here ?)

"I am Douglas Atwell," said our young friend. "Have you something for me?" and he cast a meaning glance at the boy. The young native sat down beside Douglas, and under the appearance of toying with his bayonet, slid his hand toward him along the grass. Without turning his head, Douglas raised his fingers and felt a note slip underneath, and the boy then rose and began jabbering with an ease and naturalness of manner which the most gifted actor could not have surpassed.

Douglas withdrew from the observation of his comrades and tore open the letter which bore his name, and the translation ran as follows:—

Señor Douglas Atwell,
Company M, —— th Infantry.

I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter of March 12th, in which you make an offer which I gratefully accept.

As you state that you will be on escort duty to a ration train on Friday, one of my trusted young couriers will meet you at Manaoag, and will hand you this note. We

profit by your suggestion that Dagupan is too dangerous.

In order that I may know that all is well, please do me the favor to see Señor Victoriano Quemada of Dagupan, and have him place one light in his window as a signal that my men may approach in safety.

Darkness in the window will indicate danger.

To-night then at eleven o'clock I will await your signal, and may God guard you many years.

QUICOY SIONGCO,
Colonel of Guerrillas.

P. S. We trust that you have secured the keys to the company storeroom.

Douglas thrust his hand into his pocket as he read the last line. The keys were gone, and so far as he knew, Sergeant Casey had not taken them, and nobody else was authorized to touch them.

For a moment objects seemed in a whirl before his eyes, for no matter how slight might have been his carelessness with the keys, if his storeroom were plundered and twenty odd rifles therein were captured by the Insurgents

through such carelessness, nothing could save him from trial and punishment by a general court-martial.

Once more the Krag-Jorgensens might crush out the life of his own comrades as Jackson's rifle had done on the banks of the Quingua.

Yes, his keys were gone, and think as earnestly as he might, he could not recall what he did with them, or exactly when he last had them. The moments of confusion and unpleasantness preceding his departure from Dagupan due to his forgetting temporarily that he was for duty with the escort, had caused him to leave in undue haste, and while he could not fix the whereabouts of the keys, yet he was certain that he had not turned them over to Sergeant Casey.

Eleven o'clock that night was the hour set for plundering his storeroom, but with the keys probably in the possession of his enemy, the rifles might be abstracted one by one, and Douglas might reach Dagupan to find his fair reputation tarnished forever, and Jackson's triumph would be complete.

The thought brought him to his feet prepared to act at once. He must reach Dagupan

at all hazards, lay the note before Lieutenant Milton, and if possible capture the conspirators at their work.

The Quartermaster-Sergeant of the company stationed at Manaoag owned a native pony, and Douglas dashed into the kitchen in quest of the owner of this precious beast.

"Sergeant," said he, "will you lend me your pony to ride to Dagupan? I will take good care of him, and will return him tomorrow by the escort which will be coming out."

"Certainly," said the Sergeant, "take the nag, Atwell, and welcome; but what's your hurry?"

Douglas evaded an answer, and turned the conversation to the merits of the horse, as he hurriedly adjusted the equipment and leaped into the saddle.

"I won't forget your kindness, Sergeant," said he, as he trotted out to the road. "You are doing me a great favor."

Douglas relinquished command of the escort to the non-commissioned officer, next to him in rank, and turning his horse's head toward Dagupan, he galloped down the road.

Douglas was armed with his heavy six-shooter, and felt no anxiety as he urged his little pony forward toward San Jacinto, where a company of the regiment was stationed. He saw natives laboring quietly in the fields, and passed others in the road, but their stolid, expressionless faces told nothing of the nights of terror through which they had been living since Vicente Prado's "army" had appeared to reestablish the sovereignty of the Katipunan Society.

The fierce heat of the morning, the rapid pace at which he was riding, and the anxiety which he was suffering, had parched the young Sergeant's throat, and as he saw a native girl drawing a pail of refreshing water from the well, he reined up his horse, sprang from the saddle, and asked for a drink.

The girl handed him a half cocoanut shell filled with water, and Douglas raised the cooling fluid to his lips.

He had paid no heed to a number of natives on the roadside, laborers apparently, about to enter the fields of bamboo with their bolos, which dangled in wooden sheaths at their sides; neither was he alarmed as they walked

up behind him ostensibly to secure a drink of the water which had invited him from his horse.

Suddenly Douglas was knocked to the ground by a heavy blow on the back of his head, and as he fell, his pistol was wrenched from his holster, his feet and hands were seized, and a rope was slipped around his ankles and drawn tight.

The blow had stunned him, but with a thrill of horror he recognized the man who clung to his wrists as the Moro, and with the energy of desperation he struggled for liberty until his strength succumbed beneath repeated blows of bamboo clubs.

In a moment his feet were securely lashed together, his arms were bound at the elbows, and held together by strands of rope which crossed his back, while a knotted rope was forced into his mouth with a stick, and tied behind his head.

Thus gagged and bound, a long bamboo pole was thrust between his feet and underneath the ropes which crossed his back, and two natives raised the pole to their shoulders and dashed off for the forest.

Behind them came the rest of the band, eight in number, brandishing their bolos, and striking Douglas in the face, while Pedro Acosta, the chief of the squad, followed on the horse which Douglas had ridden.

Sergeant Douglas Atwell was a prisoner in the hands of the outlaws of Juan Magaldan, chief of bolomen to Vicente Prado, and the Moro was a member of his band.

Evil fortune could not have chosen a more opportune moment for placing Douglas in their power, for they had come there for the express purpose of taking a prisoner—not Sergeant Douglas Atwell, but rather the native Presidente of San Jacinto, who was to be captured by Vicente Prado's orders, impaled on a bamboo stalk, and roasted to death over a slow fire, "because he seemed to sympathize with the American Cause."

The capture of the white victim drew off the assassins, and a few moments later the Presidente passed on in safety to his town, unconscious of the terrible danger that had awaited him.

The ropes which had been carried to the scene to bind him were now cutting through

SERGEANT DOUGLAS ATWELL WAS A PRISONER

the flesh of the poor boy whose body hung in anguish from the pole. As one pair of ruffians tired of their burden they flung him upon the ground, and drew their bolos across his throat to indicate the fate that awaited him.

Terrible as were these moments, they were, nevertheless, a welcome relief from the torture of hanging face downward from the pole.

The ropes had cut through the skin, and his forearms were swollen and powerless, when Douglas was flung at the feet of Inocincio Prado in an outlying barrio of San Fabian.

After howling his incomprehensible execrations in Douglas' face, the Insurgent officer expressed himself as well pleased, and distributed a few dollars among the captors as a reward for their brilliant work. Moreover, the prisoner's clothing was to be divided among them.

The ropes were loosed from Douglas' limp and bleeding arms, and his clothing was stripped from his body, and each received a souvenir of the event. An uproar, which came near terminating in a fatal quarrel, was produced by the discovery of twenty-five dol-

lars in his trousers pocket—funds with which he had been entrusted to make purchases for the company, but which would now go to reward the exulting outlaws who had accomplished his capture.

The prisoner was tied to a tree with the sun beating down upon his unprotected body, while an armed sentinel sat in the shade and watched him. In the afternoon, he was given a small shirt of native goods, his hands were tied behind his back, and the party marched to Inlombo where Douglas discovered, to his utter amazement, that the instigator of all the anguish and humiliation he had suffered, was none other than Vicente Prado, who had "surrendered" to the commanding officer in Dagupan.

The heart-sick boy lay in the dark room with his hands upon his throbbing temples, while from without came a native's screams of anguish, as he lay lashed to a fallen tree and suffered a torture for being an "Americanisto."

But of all the pains that Douglas suffered that night, the greatest was due to the belief that Jackson had brought about his capture.

CHAPTER XXII

A PRISONER IN THE CAMP OF "MASIQUEN LAOAK"

As the first gray streaks of dawn were appearing in the east, on the second day of his imprisonment in Inlombo, Douglas Atwell awoke, stiff and racked with pain in every limb. He had been given no covering during the night, and had slept in the light native shirt furnished him the preceding day, and which was still his only garment.

His chest now throbbed with pain, and each arm bore three deep cuts made by the ropes that had bound him, while his face, neck and shoulders were covered with ugly bruises.

There were others in the room in quite as sad a plight as he, for during the night, natives who had been tortured for their alleged sympathy with the American Cause, had been thrown into the room with him, and their groans and pleadings had helped complete a night of misery.

But with the bright sunlight that poured through the foliage and crept through the walls of his prison-room, courage came back to the suffering lad, and he resolved to rise superior to his terrible surroundings, to patiently bear the worst that might come, and to finally escape, or to sell his life dearly in the effort.

So Douglas rose, ate the cold rice with his fingers in Filipino fashion, and was ready for the fate of the day.

The Moro entered his room, mocked him, and drew the edge of his bolo across his throat with a gurgling sound, but Douglas restrained his temper. He must wait till the muscles of his arms had recovered their suppleness, till the shackles were off his limbs, and then, ah, then, the day might come when his comrades would find this nest in the forest, and he might cross bayonets for the last time with the brute who now gloated over his helplessness.

And the guard was now releasing his hands. Instead of the shackles upon his wrists, a chain was locked about his waist, and the guard attached a rope to the chain,

took the end and bade him leave the room. A pair of native knee-breeches were handed him, and in this costume he was marched upstairs, at the end of the rope, to the quarters of Vicente Prado, and the sentinel stood over him while he swept and cleaned the room, and polished the hardwood floors with fresh banana leaves.

"Trabaja, perro" (work, dog), said the guard, as he struck Douglas a stinging blow across the back with a piece of rattan. The outraged boy jumped to his feet and faced his tormentor; but, realizing that the slightest pretext would be seized upon for assassinating him, Douglas controlled his anger, and resumed his work as well as his strained muscles would permit.

The various detachments entered the room as he worked, received their orders from Vicente Prado, and soon left to take their places on the highways, in the garb of laborers, to watch for prey, while Douglas was taken to the kitchen to assist in cooking and cleaning.

At night the detachments returned bringing with them a number of native prisoners,

and once more the tortures began, and the cries of pain were still ringing in his ears when Douglas succumbed to his weariness and fell asleep.

Thus, three days passed, three days of horror, and on the evening of the last day, the riflemen and bolomen streamed in from all directions until nearly the entire command was present.

A beautiful moon rose over the tree-tops of Inlombo, and under its magnificent effulgence, the troops of Vicente Prado formed to march to his camp in the mountains.

For an hour the silent column followed trails through the jungle, across isolated rice-fields, and down the narrow lanes, until the habitations of man disappeared and only the forest enveloped the soldiers of the Katipunan order. Then the course suddenly changed to the bed of a precipitous little mountain stream, densely overhung with interlacing branches, up which the column climbed until it emerged at a little village nestling on the hillside.

"Where are we?" asked Douglas in Spanish.

"At Esperanza, with the Igorrotes, my dog,"

said the guard, in an almost incomprehensible dialect. "Look at it well. You'll never see it again," and he tapped his bolo suggestively. But the words thrilled Douglas with hope instead of fear, for Esperanza was the name of the village to which Babong had referred in his talks about his home in the mountains.

Some time ago Babong had returned to his old haunts, and somewhere among these peaks and crags Douglas Atwell knew there dwelt a true and valiant friend, and with new courage he breasted the slopes toward Prado's camp.

To the silent, branded sons of the Katipunan order, Vicente Prado declared that he, under the pseudonym of "Masiquen Laoak" (old desert), would reign as King of all the Philippines with money at his command, and Americans as his peons. And no king of ancient barbaric clan ever felt a keener joy than did Vicente Prado as he unfurled the Katipunan banner from the mountain peaks that frowned down upon the sleeping inhabitants of Dagupan.

Already a number of buildings had been partially constructed by native laborers who had been held as prisoners by a small guard,

and to the room occupied by these prisoners Douglas Atwell was consigned for the night.

Though his bare feet were bruised and bleeding from the long march over the rough country, yet he slept soundly and awoke refreshed.

Immediately after his breakfast of boiled rice and fish, he was marched to Prado's new quarters to perform his usual task, and then ordered to mount to the roof of Prado's house and go to work with the native prisoners. Only a small section of the roof had been finished and Douglas was to assist in completing it.

Though the work exposed him to the merciless heat of the sun, he gladly accepted the task, for so long as he remained upon the roof he was free from the insults and abuse of the guards who were posted over him.

Up to the date of his arrival at this camp, Vicente Prado had operated without restraint or opposition, controlling a multitude by the power of a Katipunan symbol, but the sudden and unexplainable disappearance of Sergeant Douglas Atwell had aroused the garrison at Dagupan to a suspicion of the dangers that

lurked in the road, while it had inflamed "Masiquen Laoak" to more daring enterprise.

He now despatched his armed forces in every direction, and assumed an air of open hostility; but this temerity won a prompt response, for on the morning of the third day after his arrival in the mountains, a detachment of his troops straggled back into camp bearing two wounded comrades, and Douglas Atwell heard with joy that they had encountered a patrol of the ——th Infantry during the night. The fight occurred near the concealed trail which ran to camp, and Masiquen Laoak trembled lest his hiding-place should be discovered. No American troops had ever scouted in that territory before, and Prado declared that the Igorrotes of Esperanza were spying upon him, and betraying his movements to the American troops.

"Go," said Masiquen Laoak to Inocincio Prado, "and bring back the traitors, the Igorrote spies," and shortly after noon Inocincio returned with an old Igorrote and his wife, who lived like a pair of forlorn

crows in a little shack adjacent to the spot where the Americans had been encountered.

The aged couple protested their innocence, and begged piteously for mercy, but "the Igorrotes of Esperanza need an object lesson to emphasize the importance of silence," said Vicente, and despite their apparent innocence, the aged couple were condemned to death.

Sitting upon the roof of Prado's house, Douglas Atwell saw the two old Igorrotes led into the open, bound hand and foot, and hacked to death with bolos by Benito Amanzec and a detachment of soldiers.

Benito was a newly appointed lieutenant in Prado's "army," and while as yet but eighteen years of age, he was already several times a murderer. Benito had come bravely recommended for the honor which Prado had conferred upon him, for it was reported that he had enticed an American soldier from his command at Asingan, and had then murdered him with his own rifle, and marched in Prado's camp with the weapons of his victim. Benito Amanzec was an ideal subordinate for the kind of warfare that Prado sought to

wage, and the young murderer found ready employment in his new field, where the hostility of the people to Prado was reaching a crisis.

While the security of the camp from attack by the American forces permitted Masiquen Laoak to bid defiance in louder tones, its distance from the lowland sources of supply increased the opportunities of the harassed inhabitants to evade the contributions which Prado had levied upon them; yet deeply as they groaned under his burdens and his tortures, not one dared betray him to the American authorities. Thus denied the single word which would have accomplished the downfall of Vicente Prado, the American patrols uselessly scouted the trails by night, beat up the underbrush, pursued false rumors, and followed lying, terror-stricken guides on prostrating, fruitless marches, but this display of tireless energy bore fruit in calling back the spirit to the cowed inhabitants of Pangasinan.

Of all the towns which suffered the whip of the Katipunan chieftain, San Jacinto had become the least servile and submissive.

"They are all Americanistos," said Prado.

"I will burn their town to ashes, and when the American troops are driven out, I will teach them to respect a Katipunan chieftain."

Great was the ostentation and display as Inocincio Prado, Benito Amanzec, and Englino Fernandez (a new lieutenant in Prado's force) marched out with their troops to attack and burn the town.

From behind the bars of his prison-room Douglas Atwell watched the sky glow red with the flames that shot up from the burning shacks as unarmed natives were forced to advance and set fire to their own dwellings and risk their lives in so doing before the terrific musketry of the American garrison; but in the morning only a thin line of ruined shacks on the outskirts of the town was all that Vicente Prado could boast in return for the dead and wounded in his own ranks.

This mad act was the beginning of the end, however, for publicity is the poison which is fatal to Katipunan success.

Infatuated, however, by the notoriety which his aggressive campaign was winning, Prado wrote this letter to the Presidente of Pozorrubio:—

My Dear Little Countryman :—

I know your high-toned patriotism. I know how you weep with me for the wrongs of our dear fatherland. Strike a blow for our beloved country. Assemble the faithful in the church on Easter Sunday morning, and let each carry a knife concealed beneath his camisa. The Americans will suspect nothing. Say the word. My dear countryman, I await the rifles which your noble work will win.

Masiquen Laoak.

The frightened Presidente brought the letter to the commanding officer, and became an ally, but even his courage failed when urged to guide the American troops to Prado's camp, and he declared that he knew not the hiding-place of " Masiquen Laoak."

At the news of the open disaffection of these local Presidentes, Prado's anger knew no bounds, and he condemned them all to death, and Inocincio Prado and his riflemen marched upon Rosario to claim the first victim. Noiselessly he crept beneath the Presidente's house at midnight and opened fire through the building occupied by sleeping men, women and children.

The Presidente and his little son were shot to death, and the rest of the occupants of the house were taken as prisoners to camp.

The prison was now filled to overflowing, and Douglas Atwell eagerly watched each new act of indiscretion and barbarity straining the bounds of secrecy which held the people in slavish silence.

Each day he went to work upon the various buildings which Masiquen Laoak was constructing as the nucleus of a capital which he dreamed would one day dominate the whole Philippine Archipelago; each night he spent long, sleepless hours furtively watching for some opportunity of escape, but the sentinels guarded him with a vigilance which indicated that their lives would pay the penalty if he succeeded.

He had been witness to only a small part of the barbarity which had characterized the three weeks' duration of this Insurgent camp, but his soul was sick with horror at what he saw and heard, and with anxiety as to his own fate.

Each night the Moro came to his prison-room and indicated some horrible death he was to

suffer. Once he drove a bamboo splinter through a piece of meat and roasted it slowly while he screamed and twisted his body in imitation of Douglas burning at the stake.

"But this is only the meaningless brutality of a savage," thought Douglas.

However, the next morning when Douglas went to his work upon the roof, Quicoy Siongco was in the rooms below, and he and Masiquen Laoak were discussing the "Americano." They spoke in Spanish and Douglas eagerly followed the drift of their remarks.

"What are you going to do with him?" asked the Chino.

Douglas held his breath and strained his ears, but while only fragments of the answer floated up to the prisoner on the roof, the time and manner of Vicente Prado's reply clearly indicated that Douglas was to be butchered on some great occasion when "other prisoners arrived in camp."

It was then, only a matter of time when the Moro would lead him out to slaughter, and Douglas Atwell's head reeled as he thought of this terrible fate.

It was of little moment to him now, but he

gathered from the conversation below that his capture was a "stroke of good fortune," and in no wise the result of a plot.

"He stupidly ran into our arms," said Prado, "while we were waiting for the Presidente of San Jacinto, a traitor who must finally be captured."

The native boy who had handed Douglas the note at Manaoag had mistaken him for Jackson, and while Jackson was not responsible for the capture of Douglas Atwell, the conversation showed that he was guilty of all the other forms of conspiracy of which he had been suspected. These things, at one time so important, now dwindled into insignificance beside the life and death issues in which our young friend was involved.

That night, the 31st of March, as Douglas lay upon the bamboo floor of his prison-room, he was thrilled with new hope in the news that Prado's troops had once more encountered an American patrol. The camp was in an uproar and the exhausted stragglers were marching a native woman before them as a prisoner.

They had been cut off by the Americans,

and as they broke for safety in the forest, they beheld an Igorrote, with long flowing hair, among the soldiers in the American column.

After the pursuit ceased, the remnants of the band halted and consulted together, and some there were who said they knew the Igorrote and where he lived, and they went to his home and found him absent. But his wife was there, and they took her a prisoner with her six months' old babe, and brought her to Masiquen Laoak to be judged.

What punishment was to be inflicted upon her, Douglas could not understand, but when she was pushed into his prison-room, her anguish knew no bounds, and she rushed about, clasping the babe to her breast, and screaming with terror. The sentinel roughly subdued her, and finally flung her upon the floor beside Douglas, where she sat moaning and caressing her babe.

The fading light fell upon the child's face, with its long black hair falling in shaggy ringlets about its ears, and Douglas yearned for strength to help the distracted mother.

As she looked down upon his white, sympathetic face, her emotion subsided, and in the

low mutter which she was directing to him he realized that she was appealing for aid.

Finally she held out her hand, and almost inaudibly came the words, "anting-anting, anting-anting."

Clearly she was imploring a charm against danger and for the child, and at once Douglas guessed the situation—the child was to suffer some horrible death to force the mother to acknowledge the guilt and reveal the whereabouts of her husband. And a thought flashed through Douglas Atwell's mind which made him quiver with emotion.

There was still light and the room was crowded with prisoners, who paid no heed to him or the moaning woman. Unobserved by the sentinel, Douglas drew forth pen, ink and paper which he had managed to secure from Vicente Prado's desk from time to time as he cleaned the rooms, and now, lying upon his face, he sketched with fervor and skill, for he was working for a child's life, and for his own liberty.

In a few moments he had drawn an outline of the babe as an angel, surrounded with a halo of light, while from its hand a stroke of

lightning was directed toward the dead body of Vicente Prado.

"Anting-anting," said Douglas as he stealthily slipped the sketch to the mother.

From his experience with Babong, Douglas knew that the woman would devise a crafty use for the "charm," and for hours he lay planning the next step if the first should succeed.

On the morning of April 1st, no detachments left Vicente Prado's camp, and his soldiers were standing about in groups, apparently waiting in high glee for some keen and unusual pleasure.

Breakfast was soon finished, and Vicente Prado stepped down from his house, and as he came toward the prison-room, the mob, perhaps one hundred in number, followed respectfully behind.

The doors were flung open, and the Igorrote woman was led forth, sobbing piteously, with her babe clasped in her arms.

The door was about to close on Douglas Atwell and his guard when Inocincio Prado made some remark to his chief, and Vicente

commanded the guard to bring the prisoner along.

The march had been kept up for an hour, perhaps, when the head of the column halted, and Douglas was moved up by the anxious guard until he commanded a view of the scene in front.

In an open space was an Igorrote shack, while within a large cage, constructed of hard-wood bars, was a huge python.

The savage reptile, with glittering eyes and elevated head, was thrashing about the cage in a frenzy of hunger, and Douglas Atwell's heart stood still as he saw a soldier tearing the child from the mother's arms, and he realized the import of the scene. The punishment devised for the mother was to see her child crushed and eaten by the python.

The soldier was about to advance to the cage with the babe in his arms, when the Igorrote woman uttered a piercing scream and flung herself upon the child, while with a motion so quick and dexterous that Douglas could not follow it, she flipped the sketch high into the air, and it fluttered down at Prado's feet.

Clinging to the babe, the mother suddenly

sank as if touched by some supernatural power, and turned toward heaven a look of such reverential, soul-stirring fear, that the soldier paused, startled.

Vicente Prado picked up the little sketch and visibly shrank and trembled as he gazed. There was a moment's hesitation, and a superstitious stillness settled over the throng.

Vicente Prado gazed about upon the awe-struck faces of his followers, and then upon the woman who cowered, like a stricken soul, upon the grass, and then in a voice forced and husky, he said,

"Pobrecita (poor little thing), let her have her child. We had only intended to frighten her."

Douglas Atwell scarcely knew where he was treading as he stumbled along behind the frightened mob which followed Vicente Prado back to camp.

He could not believe that Vicente Prado had intended to commit this piece of superlative barbarity, and probably he had not. But in the mind of the Igorrote mother who now fled unheeded down the mountainside, it was Douglas Atwell who had snatched her curly headed babe from the jaws of the reptile.

CHAPTER XXIII

AN ESCAPE AND A CAPTURE

Upon his return to his prison-room from the scene with the python, Douglas Atwell secreted upon his person the pen, ink, and remaining bits of paper which he had secured from Prado's desk, and in a few moments he was marched out to work, and concealed his treasures beneath the sheafs of nipa which covered a finished section of the roof.

It was a saving inspiration to conceal these articles, for when he came down from his work for dinner, his sleeping place had been ransacked, and he was himself stripped and searched.

All that was now needed was one faithful friend to carry a written or a verbal message to Lieutenant Milton, and then guide him to these hills, and a hundred eager comrades would sweep on to Douglas Atwell's rescue.

His hope was built upon the belief that the

Igorrote woman would return to express her gratitude for his service to her child, and Douglas did not hope in vain.

That night as he lay wide awake and planning, he thought he heard the wind begin to moan at the bars which crossed the window above his sleeping place. But a human note seemed to vibrate in the message of the winds, and Douglas cautiously rose upon his elbow and listened. All was quiet elsewhere, and the sentinel was leaning back against the wall in the far corner of the room with a dim lantern burning at his feet.

Douglas slowly drew himself to his feet, and pressed his face against the bars of the window. He could hear the quiet breathing of some one, and suddenly he felt the touch of a hand.

The Igorrote woman had returned. She drew Douglas' hand through the bars, and covered it with kisses, pressed it against her face, and cooed out the strange, mellow sound so like the sighing of the winds. The "anting-anting," which she thought had saved her baby's life, was in her hand.

Douglas indicated that he wished to speak,

and at length she pressed her face against the bars, and at last the prisoner of Masiquen Laoak could touch a key-board which would ring out a message of distress to hearts that beat for him in distant Dagupan.

Into the intent ear Douglas whispered the words, "Babong! Babong! Babong el Igorrote!" while the convulsive clasp of his hands completed the message which his tongue could not form.

The sentinel stirred and seemed upon the point of rising. Douglas cautiously sank in his place, and the winds ceased sighing at the window-sill, but all night long the Igorrote mother trotted like a young deer along the narrow trails, up the mountains, through the valleys, until she had delivered her message.

One glance at the sketch upon the anting-anting which the woman carried revealed the identity of the prisoner, for many times during the long camp evenings after their bouts with the bayonet, Douglas Atwell had amused Babong with his clever sketches.

And now as morning was breaking along the mountain-tops, Babong and the Igorrote mother might be seen hurrying through the

hills which led to the camp where Douglas Atwell lay a prisoner. A great bolo swung at Babong's side, a dagger glittered in his waist belt, and his heart bounded with joy like a young deer's as he leaped along the trails where every head-hunter knew and feared the name of Babong, the Igorrote.

But Douglas must contain his soul in patience, for it would be madness for Babong to approach the camp until night.

When Douglas went out to his work on the roof-top, he noticed that instead of one, there were three sentinels now guarding him, and he looked eagerly about for some explanation of this unusual precaution.

Nearly all the soldiers had left camp, but down at the kitchen an ox had been killed, and preparations were in progress for a fiesta.

"What fiesta is this?" asked Douglas.

"The fiesta of the slaughter of three white bulls," replied one of the native laborers, and the rest laughed nervously.

Douglas could not understand the reply, but nevertheless the native's manner filled him with a dread which he could not overcome.

The sun was soon pouring down its melting heat upon his head, but his head throbbed more fiercely with the thoughts that raged within, and again and again he raised his eyes and searched the narrow trails for some sign of the stalwart figure of the Igorrote.

It was ten o'clock perhaps when Douglas once more raised his eyes, and this time a spectacle met his gaze that made him sink, weak and trembling, upon his sheaf of nipa.

A long thin line of men was toiling slowly up the mountain trail from the direction of Inlombo. In front of them marched two white prisoners, naked, their arms bound behind them. They were escorted by some forty riflemen, and followed by a howling mob of bolomen.

The rabble swung into camp and halted in front of Vicente Prado's house, on the roof of which Douglas was working, and to his horror he saw that the two white prisoners were Private Anthony Gurzinski, of Manaoag, and Private Frank Kane, of Dagupan, both of his own regiment.

Inocincio Prado came up-stairs, and Doug-

las heard him reporting to his chief the important captures he had made.

Then Vicente Prado stepped out in front of his house, and looking fiercely upon the captives, cried out, "Kill them, because they are your enemies."

Then some one struck a blow which stained Gurzinski's chest with red, and seized with the lust of blood, the rabble flung themselves upon the two bound and naked prisoners, and began hacking them with their bolos.

Transfixed with horror, Douglas had not heard the sentinel commanding him to descend to the slaughter, until a shot rang out, and a bullet tore up the nipa roof beneath his body.

Douglas Atwell was to be assassinated, and the occasion of "the slaughter of three white bulls" was to be honored as a holiday.

Springing to his feet, Douglas ran to the edge of the roof and measured the distance for a leap, but it would be mere suicide to jump that great distance, and succumbing to a sudden wave of despair, he ran down the ladder intending to leap among the riflemen and to die as a brave man should.

He had reached the ground and was rushing barehanded upon the enemy, when a shrill shout broke upon his ears, and Babong, the Igorrote, leaped among the riflemen, and with a stroke like lightning almost decapitated the nearest man.

In an instant Douglas had wrenched the rifle from the hands of the second sentinel, while Babong cut down the third.

Seizing the dead man's belt, Douglas and Babong fled breathlessly behind the buildings, while the attention of the bulk of the assassins was engaged on the front side with Gurzinski and Kane.

Like a wild deer Babong ran, his long bloody bolo clutched ready for combat, while Douglas raced on behind him, and as they reached the trail down the mountainside, a great shout rose from the mob, and shots rattled about them on the rocks.

In one startled look to the rear, Douglas saw the rabble as they came on, led by the Moro, and he strained every nerve to keep pace with the fleet-footed Igorrote.

In a few moments they emerged from the trail near Esperanza, and Babong dashed

panting into the thick underbush, struck the ropes from the necks of two horses that stood waiting in the woods, and the fugitives leaped to their backs.

The stones rolled beneath the horses' feet, and the plucky little animals slipped and stumbled, but they kept their feet, and Babong galloped into a ravine, and leaped from his horse's back. The bridles were pulled from the heads of the fagged animals, and Babong dragged Douglas by the arm into a little cave and sat panting.

"We've outrun them, Babong, let us go on," urged Douglas, but Babong shook his head.

"During the night we will make the trip," he said, "but there are enemies all the way."

"But the Insurgents may trace us to the cave," said Douglas.

Babong laughed. "We will then go out through the other end, and escape by a trail which no man has ever trod but Babong, the Igorrote."

Overcome with gratitude for his deliverance, Douglas grasped the Igorrote's hand, but Babong merely smiled and pointed to the

wounds on his legs and arms which he had received that night in Manila when Douglas saved him from his enemies.

They drank from a cooling pool of water in the cave, and ate some dried fish and meat which Babong carried in a little basket slung across his back, while the Insurgents passed on and concealed themselves along the roads.

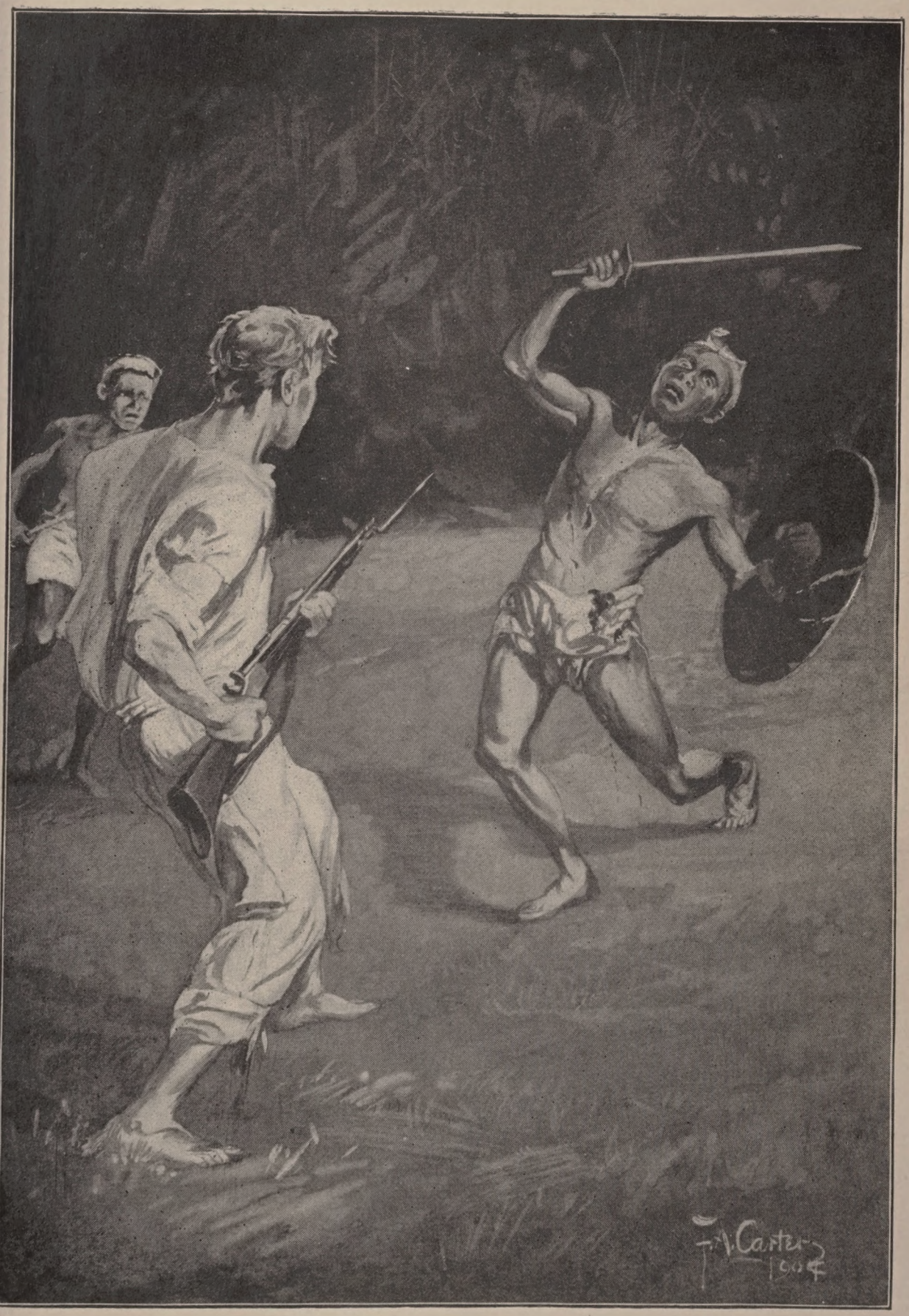
It was late at night and all was still in the towns when Douglas and Babong set out on their perilous march, and toward midnight they reached the lowlands and ventured out into a road.

They were not far from Pozorrubio when they emerged from the shadows of the bamboo into the moonlight, and found themselves within twenty paces of an armed party which was advancing upon them.

"Enemies," whispered Babong, as he whipped out his bolo and prepared for battle.

Escape was impossible except through the enemy's ranks, and Douglas raised his rifle and fired twice in rapid succession. Two men fell, and he and Babong sprang upon the rest of the party, now four in number.

A piercing scream came from the enemy's



THE MORO GAVE GROUND AND TREMBLED

faltering ranks as their leader drove them into the fight, a scream such as Douglas had heard on the banks of the Quingua when the Moro led the charge upon Corporal Casey's little squad, and now Douglas realized that the final issue had come at last as his bayonet crossed the Moro's kampilan.

Behind him Babong's fierce war-cry was sounding as his bolo rattled against the blade of an opponent, and Douglas felt that nothing could save his enemy this time.

With all his strength he immediately lunged forward, and as the Moro flung up his shield, the bayonet split it and the point pierced his chest. With a shout Douglas came on to the attack, while the Moro gave ground and his magnificent muscles trembled.

His only hope now lay in flight, but if he turned his back, a bullet would reach him, and with teeth set, and wild glittering eyes, the Moro faced the dancing bayonet. All the craft that Babong had taught him was put into play as Douglas sprang in, shot his bayonet forward, and felt it strike.

Impaled upon the bayonet the indomitable

savage seized the barrel of the rifle with his left hand and pressed the bayonet through and through his body, thus drawing Douglas near enough to sever his head from his body if he could but reach him with the last terrific sweep of his kampilan. But his valor was useless, for Douglas sprang back from the lightning blow, and the Moro toppled forward conquered and dying, as cruel a Moorish brute as ever thirsted for Christian blood.

The struggle had carried Douglas some distance from Babong, but the gallant Igorrote now staggered toward him, exhausted and bleeding, yet victor over three bolomen who lay dead in the road.

Douglas and Babong lay upon the grass in the shadow of the bamboo, panting and exhausted from the fierce struggle through which they had passed. There seemed no more danger from roving bands, and protected by his captured rifle, Douglas no longer felt much anxiety, for he had conquered the fiercest fighter in the Insurgent ranks.

As they lay upon the grass, a voice came tremulously from the roadside, "Señor, Señor."

Douglas grasped his rifle and crept forward prepared for some act of treachery, but when he reached the road, a native stood trembling before him, and he saw that it was Tomas Estrada, one of the young prisoners who had suffered a torture at Prado's hands.

"Señor," he said as Douglas recognized him, "Masiquen Laoak was attacked by troops from the north to-day after you escaped. His soldiers fled, and he is now in a little house on the trail from Inlombo not five miles from here."

"How do you know this?" asked Douglas.

"I was with him, Señor. The Moro did not follow you far, but returned and was in camp when the attack occurred. When Vicente Prado reached a safe place on the trail, the Moro gathered up some men to see if they could not catch you on the road at night, and they made me come, but I dropped in the road as soon as the fight began."

"Where are we now?" asked Douglas.

"We can reach Pozorrubio in half an hour."

"Will you guide us to the trail if I secure the help of troops to capture Vicente Prado?"

"I will, Señor," cried Tomas exultingly.

With eager haste, the three now made their way along the road, and in half an hour they were in the streets of Pozorrubio.

"There is the house of the Commandante," whispered Tomas, and Douglas dashed up the steps, and with heart leaping joyously at every thump he pounded on the door behind which slept one of his own blood.

The commanding officer flung the door open, and there in tattered and bloody native shirt and breeches, with bare and bleeding feet, Sergeant Douglas Atwell stood revealed in the moonlight.

It was no time for long explanations—Vicente Prado, who had ravaged Pangasinan for months was a fugitive and might be captured by prompt and energetic action.

Lights flashed through the building. An orderly jumped from his bed and dashed for barracks, and within fifteen minutes Sergeant Douglas Atwell, Babong, and Tomas Estrada were galloping at full speed with a mounted detachment.

Captain Stotz, the Regimental Quartermaster, who happened to be in Pozorrubio,

rode with the detachment. Not a word was spoken, but Tomas Estrada led the way on his willing steed until they reached the trail, and then Douglas Atwell forged to the front, for he was now familiar with the ground over which he had marched to this camp.

Presently the moonlight broke through the trees and Douglas saw the shack in front. A glance back over his shoulder acquainted the riders behind with the fact that they were approaching their goal, and lashing their horses into a run, the detachment swept upon the house in the forest.

Surrounding the building, the eager riders held their loaded rifles awaiting a leap from the window, as Douglas Atwell and the two officers rushed up-stairs with a lantern, crushed in the door of the shack, and Vicente Prado, the murderer of Gurzinski and Kane, and one of the greatest bandits Pangasinan had ever known, was a prisoner.

Quickly securing a rope around his waist, Douglas Atwell marched him down-stairs, and mounted him upon a pony, while the less important prisoners were ordered to walk.

All was now ready for the return trip, but

Babong did not mount, and shook his head when Douglas urged him to come. He had done his work, had paid his debt of gratitude, but he refused to go back again into the world of civilization.

Entreaty was useless, and as the detachment rode away with Vicente Prado a prisoner, Babong the Igorrote stood alone in the trail, with the moonlight playing upon the wounds he had received in his fight for Douglas Atwell's liberty.

CHAPTER XXIV

DOUGLAS ATWELL'S REWARD

THE news of the terrible fate of Privates Gurzinski and Kane in Prado's camp, of Sergeant Douglas Atwell's escape, and of Vicente Prado's capture, was humming over the telegraph lines of northern Luzon, and Company M, ——th Infantry, was deeply stirred with excitement, for Sergeant Douglas Atwell was riding back to his company with the cavalry mail couriers, while his prisoner, Vicente Prado, had been ordered transferred to Dagupan for safe-keeping and subsequent trial on a charge of murder.

The brigade commander had telegraphed congratulations to the Colonel of the ——th Infantry on his successful work against the most dangerous bandit in northern Luzon, and had commented most favorably on the gallant conduct of Sergeant Douglas Atwell. At San Jacinto and Magaldan, the soldiers cheered the "conqueror of the Moro," and

when he reached Dagupan Klondyke Jones and nearly the whole battalion were out to greet him.

But it was necessary to tear himself away from his delighted comrades, and to report to his company commander, and Douglas Atwell mounted the steps of the building where, in the preceding November, he had stood before the Provost Marshal's desk and had watched Vicente Prado as he "surrendered."

Lieutenant Milton warmly grasped the young soldier's hand as he entered, and in a moment he was surrounded by officers whose welcome was quite as hearty and touching as had been that of his old comrades in the ranks. Seated there at battalion headquarters in the midst of this group, Sergeant Douglas Atwell related the story of his capture, his life in the Insurgent camp, and his escape through the efforts of Babong, the gallant Igorrote; and no story in fiction ever held a more attentive audience.

In a private conversation with Lieutenant Milton, Douglas explained the reasons which induced him to attempt the ride which resulted in his capture, and then he slipped

back to the barracks and managed to evade his eager comrades, and to secure a few moments alone with Klondyke Jones.

The "ole sojer" shook him with very delight, and when his enthusiasm had somewhat subsided, Douglas asked the question which had been burning for utterance:

"Where is Jackson?"

"Discharged," said Klondyke, "discharged about two hours after ye left for Binalonan with thet 'ere bull train. Jackson, he had gone on guard, when 'long comes a telegram from the secretary o' war, orderin' his discharge, an' ye kin bet Sergeant Casey didn't delay 'bout makin' out his papers. Th' hull thing was done inside o' an hour, an' Sergeant Casey stuck th' papers in Jackson's hands, and says he, 'Yer relieved from guar-rd, an' discharged from th' sarvice, an' ye can't git out o' me sight too quick.' An' Jackson dropped everything flat, left all his stuff behind, an' peeled fur th' railroad station as hard as he could buckle. Th' wasn't a man t' say good-bye t' 'im, an' every mother's son in th' company was glad t' see 'im go."

"Did any one try to break into the storeroom that night?" asked Douglas.

"No," said Klondyke, "I done guard over thet 'ere storeroom thet night, an' it wouldn't a-been healthy breakin' in thet 'ere door. Casey missed th' keys an' said he knew ye didn't have them, an' I suggested it might be jest as well t' keep an eye peeled, fur things looked odd. Lad," continued Klondyke, as he lowered his voice, "them 'ere keys was found in Jackson's beddin' after he had cut fur high timber. After th' loss o' them two rifles back at Caloocan, Casey's eye teeth was sharpened, an' th' ain't no more rifles lyin' 'bout here fur thet 'ere Chinese critter."

"And where is Russell?" asked Douglas.

"In Manila," said Klondyke, "standin' an examination fur promotion t' th' grade o' second lieutenant in th' army. Thet 'ere's a fine lad, Douglas, an' I hope he gits his commission, an' ole Klondyke Jones won't ask no better than t' serve in th' ranks o' his company. Lad," said the "ole sojer," philosophically, "they's nothin' like a campaign t' bring out all th' human nature a critter's got in 'im.

"The sojers may be rough, but nothin' mean kin live long among them."

Thus the day passed, and that night Douglas Atwell lay awake trying to decide upon the proper course to pursue.

No complete proofs of guilt rested against Jackson, and moreover he was gone beyond the reach of military jurisdiction, and Douglas resolved, for his own protection, to place all the evidence in the case in the hands of Fred Russell and then to close forever this tragic volume of his life.

It was during these first days of Douglas Atwell's return from captivity, when excitement was still high, that Jack Thurston, a correspondent of the Associated Press, landed in Dagupan.

At the officers' mess Thurston heard of Prado's capture, and even as he listened Prado himself, was escorted into town by a heavy guard, and was taken shackled to a prison cell in the convent building.

Thurston's interest was completely aroused, for here was a story filled with thrilling and dramatic features, and he hastened to barracks to see Douglas Atwell himself.

The next morning a great paper in the United States glowed with his version of Douglas Atwell's heroic conduct, while incidents in the boy's life as a soldier, obtained from his enthusiastic comrades, and a sketch of his early career, completed a thrilling narrative from Jack Thurston's fascinating pen.

A reporter from a New York paper set out at once for Douglas Atwell's home in the Shawangunk Mountains, and presented himself to the boy's astonished mother.

The poor woman was almost prostrated with joy to hear that her boy was safe, and she listened with tear-dimmed eyes as the reporter read extracts from Thurston's story of his deeds. The reporter left with a photo of Douglas, which his paper published next day, while the local sheet of the adjacent town came out with a complete copy of "Douglas Atwell's capture of Gen. Prado," and the countryside talked of nothing else.

The tide in the affairs of the young soldier was running at the flood, when Representative Caldwell read the story, and realized that the time was opportune for standing before the

public of his district in the halo of light which now glowed about the local hero.

Representative Caldwell was a man of action, and without delay he saw the President, and urged an immediate and conspicuous reward for Sergeant Douglas Atwell, who had won the applause of his whole district.

The President listened attentively, and said that he would think about it, as he was then considering the claims of some other young men as well, who had merited rewards for their services in the Philippines.

Thousands of miles from the scenes of all this newspaper glory, Douglas Atwell was going about his duties in Dagupan in his usual quiet manner happy to have won the esteem of gallant men, but little dreaming of exalted glory and conspicuous rewards.

But one day, some two weeks after his return to his old comrades, Sergeant Douglas Atwell was called to battalion headquarters, and the Adjutant handed him a copy of a cablegram which had just been received, the body of which ran as follows:

"As a reward for his services in the capture of Gen. Vicente Prado of the Insurgent

Army, the President has appointed Sergeant Douglas Atwell, Company M, ——th Infantry, a Cadet, at large, to the United States Military Academy, subject to the prescribed physical and mental examination. He will proceed to the United States by the first available transport, and will report at the Military Academy on June 15th next. The travel directed is necessary for the public service."

Douglas Atwell raised his eyes from the cablegram in utter astonishment.

"I congratulate you, Atwell," said Lieutenant Milton, "and I hope to see you four years from now an officer of the regiment."

"But I have done nothing to merit such an honor," said Douglas.

"You have served with conspicuous gallantry thoughout the campaign, and you merit all you have won," said the Lieutenant. "Young men are getting their appointments at the Military Academy, whose only merit, aside from mental fitness, is the political strength of some friend or relative. You have won your honors in one of the hardest campaigns the American Army has ever experienced. I had thought of a commission

for you from the ranks, such as Russell is now trying to secure, but as you are only nineteen years of age you are not eligible, and I am delighted that the President has solved the problem by a reward so prompt and fitting."

"But I am afraid that I could never master the course at West Point," said Douglas, pensively.

"I have watched you through the campaign, Atwell, and I assure you that you will succeed," replied the Lieutenant, emphatically. "The Academy demands work first, work second, work always, and absolute drudgery part of the time. It is character as much as a knowledge of books which is required to survive the struggle at West Point. If you show the spirit there that you have shown in the campaign you will succeed.

"But there is another matter, Atwell, which I feel I must call to your attention," continued Lieutenant Milton in a lower tone, as he fixed his eyes intently upon Douglas. "I suggested a few moments ago that cadetships were not always won on pure merit.

"Well, a letter which I received this morning from a friend in San Francisco informs

me that Jackson is trying to secure an appointment. He is well backed politically, but if an exact, indisputable statement as to Jackson's private conduct during the campaign were to be forwarded to Washington, it would certainly block that appointment."

Douglas flushed crimson, and then turned pale. The shadow of his old enemy was once more across his path, and the temptation to legitimately undermine him was strong indeed ; but the fine, magnanimous spirit of the boy soon predominated.

" Jackson has not yet been appointed," said he slowly, " and I can scarcely believe that he ever will be. If he should secure the appointment, I think, sir, the Military Academy will be the best judge of his fitness."

" Which exactly expresses my feelings, also, but I felt that fairness demanded that I should lay the case before you," said Lieutenant Milton as his face beamed with satisfaction.

" Now I will turn you over to the Adjutant, who has some orders for you."

" A transport leaves in three days, Atwell," said the latter, as he rose from his desk and handed Douglas a large official envelope con-

taining the precious documents which opened to him the doors of the Military Academy. "You'd better catch the train for Manila in the morning, present your cablegram and secure a berth without delay. It will take you nearly a month to reach San Francisco, and you can spend the remaining time in preparation for the entrance examination."

And Douglas Atwell left the Adjutant's office overwhelmed with the magnitude of the honor which had been conferred upon him.

And so, with the cheers of his comrades ringing in his ears, and followed by the best wishes of every officer in the regiment, Douglas Atwell left the next morning on the train for Manila.

At eight o'clock on the morning of April 15th, Douglas leaned over the rail of an army transport, and watched the iron-roofed houses of Manila fade in the distance as the boat drew away on its long journey.

Out past Corregidor the great ship steamed, and then drew up the coast line to turn the promontory and strike out into the Pacific.

Then Douglas Atwell opened an American periodical which he had purchased as he

stepped aboard the launch which conveyed him to the transport. The first illustration within the cover halted his attention like the challenge of a sentry from the darkness, for there across the page was a beautiful illustration of the Military Academy, surrounded by a number of cadet scenes, while in the centre of the page stood the Cadet Adjutant reading an order to the Corps of Cadets.

Up to this time, Douglas had been familiar only with the rough environment of the campaign; now he beheld the finest scenes associated with the military profession. He felt the soldier rise within him, felt the strong emotion of a purpose to struggle as he had never struggled before for the prize of this fellowship, for the honor of marching in the magnificent ranks of the "black and gold and gray." Then he turned his eyes affectionately toward the fading shores of Luzon where, through a campaign of terrible sufferings and hardships, he had won his way to West Point.

ADVENTURE STORIES FOR BOYS

WINNING HIS WAY TO WEST POINT

By Capt. Paul B. Malone, U. S. A. Illustrated by F. A. Carter. The boy who can read this book without wanting to do something soldierly has no red blood in him. It tells the experiences of a young recruit in the Philippines after the transfer of the islands to the United States. The hero bears himself manfully and well, and as a result of his bravery and service, wins an appointment to West Point. The book is written by an officer who saw active service in Luzon and is now an instructor at West Point.

THE WRECK OF THE SEA LION

By W. O. Stoddard. Illustrated by John H. Betts. Tales of the sea are always fascinating to young people, especially when some active, adventuresome boys supply plenty of thrilling escapades to add to the interest. Tho story of an eventful cruise in Southern Waters, as told by an old sea captain, and the ludicrous boastings and experiments of a would-be scientist, constitute a pleasing variety of incident, and afford just that amount of instructive material needed to make a perfect book for young readers.

THE YOUNG FINANCIER

By W. O. Stoddard. Illustrated by John H. Betts. A unique story, the scene of which is laid in the money center of New York City. The young hero begins life as a broker's messenger and passing rapidly from one post to another in good time rises to a position of importance and responsibility. Numerous exciting experiences incident to the eventual success in his business career all combine to form a most interesting narrative.

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ADVENTURE STORIES FOR BOYS

TRUE TO HIS TRUST

By EDWARD S. ELLIS, A. M. Illustrated by J. STEEPLE DAVIS. The hero of this story will win his way at once into the heart of every one, and his pluck and perseverance will carry the sympathy of every reader through his many adventures, struggles, and singular experiences. Like all of the author's works, the incidents teach in the most convincing manner that true manliness and sturdy integrity are the only principles through which happiness and success in life are possible.

COMRADES TRUE

By EDWARD S. ELLIS, A. M. Illustrated. In following the career of two friends from youth to manhood, the author weaves a narrative of intense interest. This story is more realistic than is usual, as the two heroes pass through the calamitous forest fires in Northern Minnesota and barely escape with their lives. They have other thrilling adventures and experiences in which the characteristics of each are finely portrayed.

AMONG THE ESQUIMAUX

By EDWARD S. ELLIS, A. M. Illustrated. The scenes of this story are laid in the Arctic region, the central characters being two sturdy boys whose adventurous spirit often leads them into dangerous positions. They visit Greenland; go on a hunting expedition, have a number of stirring adventures and hairbreadth escapes, but ultimately reach home safe and sound. It is a capital and instructive book for boys.

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ADVENTURE STORIES FOR BOYS

THE CAMPERS OUT

By EDWARD S. ELLIS, A. M. Illustrated. Many of the scenes are so vividly described that the reader can, in his imagination, enjoy the excitement of the chase and all the pleasures of a good camping tour. In addition to the vivid descriptions of many exciting adventures, this story teaches a lesson in morals that cannot fail to prove helpful to every reader. It is well planned and well written, and is full of adventure of just the right sort.

THE YOUNG GOLD SEEKERS

By EDWARD S. ELLIS, A. M. Illustrated by F. A. CARTER. A thrilling account of the experiences of two boys during a trip to the gold fields of Alaska. The hardships that they endure, the disappointments they suffer, the courage and perseverance that they manifest in the face of seemingly insurmountable obstacles, and their eventual success in their undertaking, are all most graphically portrayed.

ANDY'S WARD

By JAMES OTIS. Illustrated. A fascinating narrative of the life and experiences of "Museum Marvels." They dwell in a house owned by a sword-swallower, whose wife, the "Original Circassian," is entrusted with its management. The rest of the household includes a dwarf, nicknamed the "Major," a fat lady, a giant, and a snake-charmer. The private life of the marvels forms a story full of incident, and one that possesses that peculiar simplicity of style which has won for this author such a host of readers.

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ADVENTURE STORIES FOR BOYS

CHASING A YACHT

By JAMES OTIS. Illustrated. A semi-nautical tale of adventure about boys, written for boys, and will certainly be appreciated by boys wherever they may be found. The story of how the heroes, two bright, manly fellows, built a steam yacht, how she was stolen from them, and how they eventually regained possession of her, is full of life and is replete with exciting and interesting incident that will rivet the attention throughout.

THE BRAGANZA DIAMOND

By JAMES OTIS. Illustrated. A volume that will hold its readers spell-bound as they follow the two boy characters and the bright, courageous girl in their search for the famous diamond. Much useful information is incidentally conveyed and many things with which few persons are familiar are explained. It will hold the attention of young readers as much as Robinson Crusoe.

IN ALASKAN WATERS

By W. BERT FOSTER. Illustrated by W. S. LUKENS. A sturdy lad of San Francisco is taken, against his will, aboard a vessel bound on the unlawful errand of seal poaching in Alaska. At the time of his departure a large sum of money disappears from his guardian's safe, and suspicion naturally, but unjustly, is attached to the boy. The unraveling of the mystery created by this incident, the proving of the hero's innocence, and his thrilling adventures at sea, form a fascinating story.

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ADVENTURE STORIES FOR BOYS

THE LOST GALLEON

By W. Bert Foster. Illustrated by J. Steeple Davis. The search for a lost treasure ship and her eventual discovery form the basis of this very dramatic story. It possesses a great deal of originality, and is free from the conventional incidents that usually characterize stories of this description. Incidentally, much valuable information is afforded the reader by the insight that is given into the ship-chandlery business, in which the young hero engages as the means of earning a livelihood.

EXILED TO SIBERIA

By William Murray Graydon. Illustrated by F. A. Carter. This is one of the most thrilling stories ever written. The heroes, two American boys, become involved in a political plot that nearly costs them their lives. As nearly all the action occurs in the mines and military prisons of frozen Siberia it can readily be imagined that in the midst of such dramatic surroundings the interest is most intense. The plot is absorbing, the adventure exciting, the movement rapid, and the style unsurpassed.

IN THE CAMP OF THE CREEKS

By Louis Pendleton. Illustrated by F. A. Carter. Not a sensational Indian story, but a stirring tale of the last stand made by the Creek Indians in Georgia. The chief actors, two young men and a girl, fall into the hands of the Creeks, and only after numerous exciting adventures succeed in making their escape. There is considerable information pertaining to the pastimes and customs of the Indians, and not a little historical information.

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ADVENTURE STORIES FOR BOYS

THE LOST GOLD MINE

By FRANK H. CONVERSE. Illustrated. At the opening of this story, the hero, by a singular circumstance, finds himself in possession of certain papers relating to a gold mine in the far West, and he and his chum conclude to make a search for it. Their untiring efforts are eventually crowned with success, but not until the party has suffered many privations and escaped numerous impending dangers such as characterized the early days of the gold fever.

THE YOUNG SHIPBUILDER

By SOPHIE SWETT. Illustrated by JOHN HENDERSON BETTS. This is a delightful tale of some New England young people who are left to fight the battle of life alone. Through many hardships and discouragements they continue the old shipyard, and by dint of great perseverance and nobility of purpose, finally attain much success.

A CAPE COD BOY

By SOPHIE SWETT. Illustrated by P. T. HOYT. A realistic story of the New England Coast, in which are vividly depicted the manly efforts of a Portuguese castaway, who attempts to assist a family in return for kindness shown him. A pronounced sea atmosphere pervades the whole story, which contains many thrilling adventures by water and hardships on land. A performing bear, escaped from a traveling menagerie, is quite an interesting figure and affords much amusement and excitement.

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A MOONSHINER'S SON

By WILL ALLEN DROMGOOLE. Illustrated by F. A. CARTER. The scene of this dramatic story is laid in the mountains of Tennessee amid the haunts of the illicit distillers. The hero is made to suffer many hardships as a result of his father's unlawful business, but after the latter's tragic death, the boy is afforded an opportunity of going to a large city, where his sterling merit soon brings him into prominence. The story is full of the most thrilling incidents, and the tone is wholesome and elevating.

THE MONCASKET MYSTERY

By SIDNEY MARLOW. Illustrated. Wise indeed is that teacher or parent who provides his children with such healthful and entertaining reading as this book will prove to be. It is a pleasing story, full of base-ball and fishing experiences, with just sufficient "mystery" to add zest to the tale. The principal character is not called upon to perform any impossible feats, but he exemplifies his character in the pursuits of daily life and always proves faithful to the confidence reposed in him.

HARRY AMBLER

By SIDNEY MARLOW. Illustrated. A charming story of a bright boy, that is full of exciting incidents, and is told in a pleasing style. It is interesting without being sensational, and incidentally shows that courage and honesty are the sure roads to success. The characteristics displayed by the hero can be emulated with profit by boys generally. The book points out a moral without making that the "reason of being" of the story.

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ADVENTURE STORIES FOR BOYS

FINDING A FORTUNE

By HORATIO ALGER, JR. Illustrated by W. S. LUKENS. Most boys would consider themselves very lucky to find a box of bonds and bring to justice the rascals who had stolen them, but Harry Gilbert simply did what he thought was right and persisted in it, even though at one time it looked as if the rascals would outwit him. In the end, however, everything turns out well for the manly, upright boy, and he receives his just reward.

FORGING AHEAD

By HORATIO ALGER, JR. Illustrated by W. S. LUKENS. This is an interesting narrative of an earnest, energetic, and ambitious boy, who supports his widowed mother, and by persistent efforts against great odds succeeds in rising in the world. There is an abundance of incident and adventure, and the story is one that will encourage any young reader to an effort to make the best of himself.

THE WORLD BEFORE HIM

By HORATIO ALGER, JR. Illustrated by ROBERT L. MASON. The hero, who has been led to expect a comfortable income, is suddenly thrown upon his own resources through the scheming villainy of his stepfather. He is confronted with many difficulties, but by perseverance, courtesy, and good, hard common sense, works his way steadily upward.

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ADVENTURE STORIES FOR BOYS

MAKING HIS MARK

By HORATIO ALGER, JR. Illustrated by ROBERT L. MASON. A manly, resourceful lad, left to the care of an unscrupulous stepmother, finds his home unbearable, and starts out in the world, determined to make a place for himself. Naturally, he encounters many obstacles and meets with numerous discouragements, but his courage and perseverance enable him to push steadily on until he attains a glorious success. The book will prove not only intensely interesting but also helpful to every boy who reads it.

THE YOUNG BOATMAN

By HORATIO ALGER, JR. Illustrated. A story of a manly boy, whose fine character is brought in contact with a coarse and cruel one in the person of his stepfather. Perseverance and honesty will always win, as is shown in this charming story. A young boy, by pluck and energy, overcomes difficulties that would have baffled many an older head. Grit, the hero, is worthy of his name, and every boy will sympathize with him in his troubles and rejoice with him in his triumphs.

THE ODDS AGAINST HIM

By HORATIO ALGER, JR. Illustrated. The book is full of bright, cheerful, and amusing incident, showing that a boy of good, honest, sterling, industrious habits can always secure friends and succeed in earning an honest living, and in spite of formidable obstacles can obtain a position of comfort and respectability. The hero is full of resolution and pluck, and by diligence and faithfulness he rapidly advances, in spite of the "odds," to success.

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